Creative, Arts-Inspired Tasks for Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy at a German University

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Abstract

Although artistic practices have been shown to have value for intercultural education in contexts such as community projects, research into the use of these methods for Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP) in HE is scarce. This reflexive, interpretivist practitioner case study addresses this gap, investigating the value of creative, arts-inspired tasks for learning within my own undergraduate Intercultural Communication course at a large university in Germany. Three subquestions addressed (i) the participants' attitudes to the tasks, (ii) the role of creative process for learning, and (iii) the relative merits of the tasks set.

Twenty-four participants carried out a collaborative poster-making task and created individual collages which were subseqently shared. Their experiences were discussed in individual and small group semi-structured interviews, carried out in two phases. Participants' reflective course portfolios and my own researcher diary supplemented this data in a 'bricolage' approach to research that was adapted to the study's context and aims. Analysis was characterised by processes of abduction (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009) whereby theory and empirical data are successively reinterpreted in the light of each other in an intellectual rather than technical process. Ellingson's (2009) conceptualisation of 'crystallization' informed the inclusion of artistic work and 'interludes' alongside the main narrative in the thesis.

The contribution of the study is two-fold, demonstrating the value of artistic practices for undergraduate learning and as an application and extension of CICP specifically, developing the theoretical work of Halualani (2017) and Sobré (2017). Six key findings emerged from the discussion of the data. Three key findings demonstrated the ability of artistic processes and products to (a) fulfil the need for relatedness, (b) allow the generation of insightful, personally meaningful knowledge, and (c) serve as prompts for reflective thinking. Two further findings identified productive dialectical tensions for the creative process and qualitative differences between the collaborative and individual tasks. The final finding showed how arts-inspired work could advance and extend notions of CICP in HE, encouraging open attitudes and authentic connections with others, a tolerance of ambiguity and risk, an appreciation of difference, and critical self-reflection. Because the tasks were also found to validate undergraduate students' unique voices and nurture agency, it is argued that they offered participants more emancipatory ways to approach their learning.

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Illustrations

List of Abbreviations

BERA	British Educational Research Association
CICP	Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy
CP	Critical Pedagogy
HE	Higher Education
IC	Intercultural Communication
IP1/2	Interview Phase 1/2
LSP	Lego Serious Play
NRW	Nordrhein Westfalen/North Rhine-Westphalia
PAR	Participatory Action Research
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees/The UN Refugee Agency

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature:

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Chapter 1 | Introduction

1.1 Introduction to Chapter 1

> Critical intercultural communication pedagogy does not have a particular set of instructional cookie-cutter practices, manuals, and models that teachers can employ. (Toyosaki and Atay, 2017: xiv)

> [I]f the aim is to preserve the other in all its irreducible strangeness, we may have to design courses that question some of the most trusty principles of intercultural language education theory and practice. (Dasli and Díaz, 2017c: 225)

At a time when populist and xenophobic discourse in Europe and beyond is growing (Messing and Ságvári, 2019) and global migration (much of it forced) is increasing, the need to critically examine, develop and promote critical forms of intercultural communication (IC) pedagogy is pressing. Unlike the dominant instrumentalist and skills-based approaches to teaching IC in HE contexts, critical intercultural communication pedagogy (CICP) aims to counter the potentially dangerous reification of culture and cultural differences, encouraging students to recognise their own positionality within systemic power imbalances and supporting them in the development of open, inclusive and respectful attitudes. With a social justice agenda, CICP furthermore seeks ways to empower students to collaborate and take action to improve our communities (Sobré, 2017).

However, the quotations above allude to the complexities of implementing this pedagogy: in order that pedagogical practice may preserve the alterity of those in the seminar room and beyond, promoting ethical interaction and transcending nation-state conceptualisations of culture, IC curricula and materials need to be designed specifically to address the identities and concerns of intercultural learners and reflect local knowledge and practice (MacDonald and O'Regan, 2012). Some techniques for enabling this in undergraduate education do exist (see, for example, Atay and Toyosaki, 2017), but these are almost exclusively language-based and research that explores the use of creative, arts-inspired activities for CICP in an HE context is scarce. This is surprising given the

existence of a significant body of research that attests to the value of artistic practices for ethical intercultural education in other settings (e.g. community projects) and perhaps reflects a view of artistic methods as antithetical to academic work. Scholars such as James and Brookfield (2014) have, however, convincingly shown that imaginative, creative practices can enhance learning in HE and this thesis therefore addresses this gap, examining the ways in which using such methods can contribute to and extend CICP in an undergraduate seminar room.

This first chapter explains my personal motivation for undertaking the study and follows with a more detailed presentation of the rationale for the research, the research questions and the approach I took to answering them. Finally, an overview of the structure of this thesis is given.

1.2 The Origins of The PhD Inquiry: Personal Motivation

This study has its origins in my own practice and desire for further professional development. Since graduating from Glasgow University with an MA in French and German in 2000, I have taught English for over 15 years in Germany, at two universities and as a freelance Business English trainer. I have been in my current position as an English language practice teacher in a large German university since 2009 and, although I primarily teach language practice classes, I have also had the opportunity to develop and teach an introductory level course on intercultural communication (IC). By the time I came to undertake this research, I had offered the course four times and it had evolved from semester to semester as I built my own understanding of the field. I found the subject increasingly fascinating, but wanted to devote more time to understanding its pedagogy: approaching IC from the rather instrumentalist, neo-essentialist perspectives espoused by most textbooks (and typical of Business English training) was fun and fairly straight-forward, but it neither did justice to the complexity of my students' intercultural lives nor helped to prepare future language teachers, who typically comprised half my class, for intercultural classrooms. Piller's (2011) *Intercultural Communication: A Critical Introduction*

and Holliday's (2011) *Intercultural Communication and Ideology* were the first two volumes I encountered that offered a different approach, illuminating the ways in which everyday IC intersects with questions of identity, social justice and global politics. They signalled an important way forward, but also exposed uncomfortable gaps in my knowledge and my awareness of the ethical dimensions of IC. Thus, research in this area was the perfect opportunity to develop my own criticality and get to grips with the scholarship.

The next step was to identify a research problem that would offer something new to the field and further understanding and practice in this area. In June 2014, I met Katja Frimberger, who would later become my co-supervisor. By the time we had finished our lunch in Glasgow, the research had taken shape in my mind: inspired particularly by the creative, arts-based research methodology she described in her blogpost (Frimberger, 2013b) and armed with the new knowledge that inquiry into my own pedagogy could constitute robust research, I put together the proposal upon which this study is based. In order to embark on my PhD, I reduced my full-time contact to a part-time position and my employer also supported me with a 25% teaching release.

The opportunity to better understand and evolve my own IC pedagogy while also exploring the value of creative, artistic ways of learning that I found so inspiring in other contexts (e.g. Frimberger, 2013b; Axtmann, 2002) was both exciting and daunting. The latter, in particular, took me out of my comfort zone as I had no previous experience of employing artistic methods for learning nor a background of working in the Arts. However, I suspected that I was missing out on something, and so potentially were my students. In some respects, I came to consider my own discomfort the ideal precondition for undertaking the study. It enabled me to position myself alongside my students in an honest and critical exploration of the artistic tasks they undertook, empathise with those who were sceptical, and model an openness to risk-taking by trying out unconventional methods that I felt rendered me, as course teacher, vulnerable. I was also aware that undertaking practitioner research designed to raise questions about the status quo would require careful negotiation of questions of loyalty to my workplace and could change relationships with colleagues. Nevertheless, I was optimistic

that the study would be received with interest and that the benefits of undertaking the research outweighed the risks.

1.3 Research Rationale, Research Questions and Approach

IC as a field of study is both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary. With its roots in intercultural training that was offered to U.S. government personnel to advance U.S. national interests in the aftermath of World War II, it has since become a highly diverse academic field encompassing the work of scholars across disciplines including anthropology, linguistics, cultural studies, and psychology. The present inquiry is grounded in IC scholarship informed by communication studies (e.g. Halualani, 2011; Holliday, 2011; Toyosaki and Atay, 2017; Sobré, 2017) and foreign language education (e.g. Guilherme, 2002; Phipps and Gonzalez, 2004; Dasli and Díaz, 2017a) and located at the critical intersection of these two fields. In a critical perspective, as outlined by Sobré (2017), scholarship engages with the political and ethical dimensions of IC, addressing questions of situated power interests, politicised identities and the relationships between culture, communication and politics. Sorrells (2013) makes the case that this involves responding to globalising forces that have increased both opportunities for intercultural interaction and social inequality.

The critical turn in IC studies has necessitated closer attention to the translation of this critical stance into an IC pedagogy for undergraduate study. At universities, IC courses have generally taken a predominantly instrumentalist and pragmatic focus (e.g. Jandt, 2010; Neuliep, 2012) encouraging undergraduate students to learn the rules of culture and develop the knowledge and skills to communicate effectively with others, an approach that arguably reflects the neoliberal concern with developing and measuring intercultural competence as a graduate attribute (Halualani, 2017). However, this generally represents an essentialist approach to IC that serves to gloss over unjust intercultural relations and reinforce the status quo rather than seeking to address inequality and problematise privilege (Gorski, 2008; Halualani, 2017). Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP), in contrast, aims to help students illuminate and respond to systemic power imbalances, empowering

them to take action and collaborate with others to improve the world in which we live (Sorrells, 2013; Sobré, 2017). From a critical perspective, culture is not viewed as a fixed set of traits and behavioural characteristics shared by a group of individuals but rather as a set of fluid, socially constructed meanings that reflect ideological and political interests (Holliday, 2011). Thus, CICP requires students and educators alike to recognise their own positionalities and acknowledge that our identities and the way that we create knowledge are bound up in our cultural and linguistic backgrounds, gender, ethnicity, age and context in which we are working (Sorrells, 2013). The pedagogical focus lies particularly on learning processes rather than aiming for the creation of 'interculturally competent' citizens. Conceptions of 'critical cosmopolitanism', for example, can be viewed as a philosophy and moral vision for being in the world that entails:

> a deep appreciation for difference, the willingness to engage with cultural Others and be transformed by such experiences, kindness towards strangers, and the labor of the imagination to envision a world that aspires towards peace, possibilities and intercultural respect for those near and far. (Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013: 7)

CICP is a fairly recent acronym in the scholarly literature, although teaching IC following the principles of Critical Pedagogy was discussed 15 years ago by Phipps and Guilherme (2004). Two recent edited volumes of scholarship on CICP, *Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy* (Atay and Toyosaki, 2017) and *The Critical Turn in Language and Intercultural Communication Pedagogy* (Dasli and Díaz, 2017a) provide further instances of CICP in practice in HE, yet there remain calls for educators to develop pragmatic and impactful ways of implementing the critical turn in pedagogy. For example, Halualani (2017: 4) writes that critical IC scholars have yet to give tangible form to a pedagogy that can effectively counter the “limiting and even dangerous skills-based focus“ in IC and Kullman (2019: 112) maintains that “[h]ow to implement the 'critical turn' [in research and pedagogy] in a way that has a real impact remains a major challenge for many at a time when dominant discourses of culture and identity are ever more powerful”. Although Piller (2011) and Sorrells (2013) offer valuable discussion questions and/or research activities at the end of each

chapter of their textbooks, these can often feel inaccessible or overly time-consuming. Furthermore, they do not in themselves foster a willingness to engage with intercultural Others and are not always relevant to the lives and experiences of all students. This thesis therefore hopes to extend CICP to include inclusive artistic practices at a time when cultivating and empowering critically aware, open and responsible individuals is particularly important: in 2016 alone, Germany recorded over 700,000 new asylum applications (UNHCR, 2017) against a backdrop of what Messing and Ságvári (2019) label "a tectonic shift in the growth of populism and xenophobic political and public discourse in Europe and its wider environment".

Based on the literature on creative learning and inspired by other examples of artistic practice in education (e.g. Axtmann, 2002; Frimberger, 2013b), I hypothesised that creative, arts-inspired ways of working within HE could hold significant potential for engaging my students and enhancing their personal development, despite their apparent absence in undergraduate seminar rooms at my workplace. For CICP in particular, working in artistic ways would appear to hold particular potential as, for example, art-making processes have been argued to foster the use and development of our imaginations, helping us view the world from unfamiliar perspectives and explore new options (Allen, 1995; Simons and Hicks, 2006). Maxine Greene (1995) suggests that engagement with art can therefore destabilise the status quo, allowing us to imagine better worlds towards which we can work. Furthermore, Kraehe and Brown (2011) maintain that allowing students to craft their own original responses in artistic work also fosters self-confidence and agency in students, capacities that are necessary in order to act to bring about a more just world. Collaging techniques in particular have been shown to foster an inquiry stance towards the exploration of difficult themes and have the potential to "counteract the hegemony and linearity in written texts, increase voice and reflexivity [...] and expand the possibilities of multiple realities and understandings" (Butler-Kisber, 2008: 268). Thus, artistic tasks appear well-placed to encourage the kind of learning that would be valuable in a critically-oriented intercultural communication seminar room. Although artistic ways of working and learning have been employed as part of intercultural education in a variety of settings,

particularly in community projects (e.g. Harris, 2013; Sobré, 2017), Axtmann's (2002) description of the embodied activities she employed for “transcultural performance” in classroom learning remains the only example I have encountered of artistic tasks being integrated into an undergraduate course. If the arguments in favour of using artistic methods outlined above are sound, these ways of learning have the potential to advance CICP.

This research is therefore an analysis of the pedagogical value of two arts-inspired tasks that I built into my critically-oriented IC course. The first task involved students collaborating to create a poster to illustrate their conception of 'culture' and the second saw students creating individual collages on the subject of 'intercultural competence' which they subsequently shared with others. As outlined in Chapter 4, participants discussed their experiences in interviews and most also completed reflective course portfolios, which supplemented the interview data. The research questions driving the inquiry, finalised after several iterations, were:

Overarching question:

- (How) is carrying out creative, arts-inspired tasks such as collaging and making posters valuable for learning in my critically-oriented 'Intercultural Communication' course? (RQ1)

Subquestions:

- To what extent and in which ways did participants value the creative, arts-inspired tasks? (RQ2)
- How did participants approach the tasks and what role did the creative process play? (RQ3)
- What were the differences between the collaborative and individual tasks? (RQ4)

As a form of practitioner case study investigation situated within an interpretive paradigm (Thomas and Myers, 2015), I was careful to acknowledge and reflect on my own subjectivities throughout the inquiry. Rather than striving for neutrality, I regarded my emic perspective and wide range of contextual knowledge as

assets to be critically 'mined' (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009). At each stage of the study I sought the methods best suited to answering the research questions, employing a 'bricolage' approach as an “emancipatory research construct” within practitioner research that seeks to capture the co-created nature of the data and highlight my own evolving criticality (Kincheloe et al., 2011: 167). In this thesis, I sought to disclose my pedagogical values and positioning and aimed for a high degree of reflexivity, particularly with regard to my ethical commitments as teacher-researcher towards my student-participants.

Some of the rhetoric employed by advocates of arts-based learning in education appears utopian, presenting it as the solution to society's problems. For example, Hulsbosch maintains:

> Art making offers students the opportunity to develop an authentic voice, which can be renegotiated in relation to an ever-changing world. When educating students for a global, multicultural world they will become the change agents of tomorrow who will humanize the world through acutely recognizing difference, developing social consciousness and demonstrating diverse ways of thinking that foster tolerance and appropriate citizenship and result in the creation of a supportive equal social environment for all. (Hulsbosch, 2010: 99)

While I hope that Hulsbosch is right, Freire, in conversation with Shor, warns that critical educators should not idealize the role of education, arguing that “we should be clear that our work, our activities as an educator, will not be enough to change the world” (Shor and Freire, 1987: 180). It is perhaps enough to be satisfied with sowing the seeds for transformation, emancipation or social consciousness, hoping that students will share these goals but recognising that there are many other influences at play in their lives. Arts-inspired tasks may have the potential to facilitate the positive and individual and social development advocated in CICP, whilst also allowing students the autonomy to choose their own paths.

1.4 Outline of Thesis

This introduction has presented the rationale for the study, outlining a gap in CICP scholarship and detailing the interpretive approach taken to investigating the potential of arts-inspired tasks for expanding the practical applications of CICP in HE. It also explained the origins of the research, rooted in my personal desire to push my own IC pedagogy in new directions and towards a more critically-oriented stance. After this introductory chapter, the thesis is organised in 7 additional chapters as follows:

Chapter 2. Theoretical Outlook
This chapter positions the research within the literature on the three distinct but complementary fields of research and practice that inform this study and the pedagogical approach: critical pedagogy, intercultural communication and arts-inspired, creative learning. Firstly, I explain the basic tenets of critical pedagogy and outline the aspects of this philosophy of education that are particularly relevant for this study. I then introduce IC as a field of research and pedagogy, discussing contrasting approaches and arguing in favour of a critical stance that reflects global concerns and views culture and communication as contested and embedded in systemic power imbalances. From this perspective, I argue that critical cosmopolitanism and “intercultural praxis” (Sorrells, 2013) provide more ethical guides for pedagogy than models of 'intercultural competence'. This chapter also discusses the rationale for using arts-inspired tasks for learning in HE, arguing that their capacity to engage students in a discovery process that harnesses the imagination and fosters reflection and interpersonal connections has great potential for CICP.

Chapter 3. Case Context
In this chapter I situate the research in the context of the HE setting in which it was carried out and highlight some of the contextual factors peculiar to this setting. I trace the development of the IC course I taught and provide details of the class I taught in winter semester 2015/16 when this study was conducted. In particular, I highlight the pedagogical goals and the ways in which these were translated into activities within the seminar room.

Chapter 4. Methodology

This chapter outlines the approach taken to the inquiry, positioning the study as a form of practitioner research that views participants as co-creators of knowledge and which aims to challenge the status quo. I also consider the role of creative work as part of the methodology, arguing that it adds an important dimension to a study that aims to be multi-layered and holistic. The chapter then presents the research participants, details data collection, and demonstrates how the concepts of 'bricolage', abduction and 'crystallization' informed analysis and the representation of findings within this thesis. Complex, context-driven questions of ethics are also discussed, whereby personal pedagogical values also shaped the character of the research process and the methods employed.

Chapter 5. Findings: Engaged, Creative Thinking for Embodied Learning

Chapter 5 is the first of two chapters that present the research findings and critically examines participants' perceptions of the creative tasks. Drawing primarily on theories of creative learning, I argue that participating in the tasks increased student motivation and engagement in unexpected ways and that the creative process facilitated the generation of new ideas, with collaging in particular functioning as a "tool of discovery" (Chilton and Scotti, 2014: 169). Many students experienced initial feelings of insecurity and scepticism but these can be considered signs of 'productive discomfort' that pushed students to think differently and discover new ways to approach their learning.

Chapter 6. Findings: Arts-inspired Tasks for Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP)

The second of two chapters that presents my analysis, Chapter 6 builds on the findings established in Chapter 5 to critically discuss the extent to which the tasks can be claimed to have value for CICP specifically. With reference to the literature on CICP, I argue that the artistic tasks encouraged reflective and constructive thinking, allowing students to create their own unique and insightful conceptions of 'culture' and 'intercultural competence' and engage in positioning and contextual learning when encountering other ideas and

approaches. I also show that creative collaboration fostered generative communication and interpersonal connections, while sharing the individual collages fostered self-reflection, an inquiry stance and an appreciation of different perspectives.

Chapter 7. Discussion: Returning to the Research Questions

Chapter 7 synthesises and connects the analysis presented in the previous two chapters into six key findings that answer my research questions. Firstly, I argue that the ability of the tasks to encourage students to invest themselves personally emerged as key to their potential. I then highlight the value of the creative process for allowing students to surface and generate new ideas and show how certain dialectical tensions enhanced participants' experience of working artistically. The creative 'products' were also found to have significant potential for fostering reflexivity, while working collaboratively and individually were found to fulfil different pedagogical goals. Finally, I argue that, although the artistic tasks had limitations, they were able to contribute to an emancipatory CICP by fostering capacities such as an inquiry stance, self-awareness, and the ability to appreciate difference and other perspectives.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

I conclude this thesis by highlighting my contribution to scholarship in creative learning in HE in general and for CICP specifically, arguing that arts-inspired tasks have the capacity to extend the boundaries of this pedagogy for undergraduate students. Furthermore, I discuss the implications of the research findings, the potential directions for future inquiry suggested by this study, and the limitations of the study. Finally, I close this thesis with my personal reflections on the research process and final thoughts about the study.

This thesis is punctuated by 'interludes' crafted from my researcher diary, student portfolios and interviews. These are included to present sometimes tangential yet potentially illuminating aspects of the research process, the participants or the setting in non-traditional ways that enable a different engagement with the text (Ellingson, 2009).

Chapter 2 | Theoretical Outlook: Critical Pedagogy, Intercultural Communication and the Potential of Arts-Inspired, Creative Tasks.

2.1 Introduction to Chapter 2

The aim of this chapter is to situate the research into arts-inspired learning in my IC class in terms of three distinct but overlying areas found in the scholarly literature: critical pedagogy (CP), intercultural communication (IC), and arts-inspired, creative learning. The chapter is split into five parts. Following this introduction, section 2.2 Critical Pedagogy outlines the main features of CP that underpin the rationale for this case study and the values that inform the pedagogical goals. Section 2.3 Intercultural Communication provides an overview of the most relevant concerns in IC pedagogy in HE and outlines how praxis has been changed by the influence of the critical turn in this field. Within this section, notions of "intercultural praxis" and "critical cosmopolitanism" as specific conceptions of CICP are discussed. Section 2.4 Conceiving Arts-Inspired, Creative Learning for CICP details the arguments for including creative, arts-inspired tasks as part of an engaging and emancipatory education, highlighting the aspects of creative learning that appear to hold most potential for CICP. The fifth and final section provides a summary of the chapter and presents the research questions. Figure 2.1 below shows how scholarship in the three key areas intersect to inform the rationale for this study.

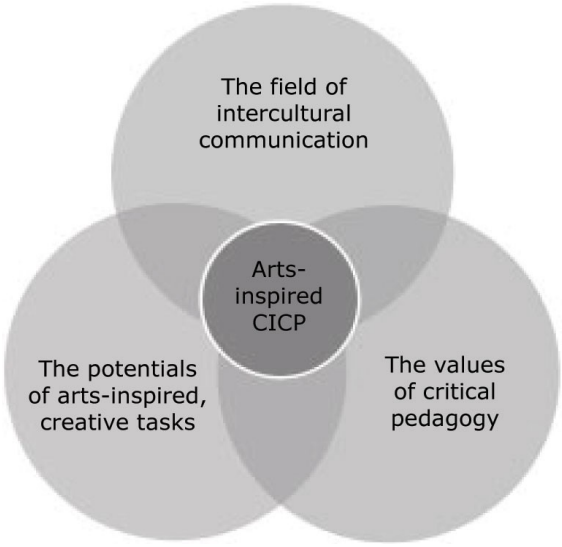

Figure 2.1: The three areas of scholarship that underpin the inquiry

2.2 Critical Pedagogy

Principles of CP have informed my approach to teaching in the years since I encountered bell hook's (1994) *Teaching to Transgress*. Her writing had a profound effect as it spoke to my experience and hopes for teaching, whilst acknowledging the disappointments and unpredictable paths that teaching and learning can take. As the research questions addressed in this thesis were motivated by a desire to discover new ways to enact CP in the context of IC, this section details this educational stance. The first subsection outlines some central tenets of CP. Then, in three further subsections, I address in greater depth three features of this philosophy of teaching and learning that are particularly relevant to the epistemology and approach to pedagogy that underpin this study: democracy and agency in the classroom and beyond (2.2.2), the nature of knowledge and 'situated pedagogy' (2.2.3), and the importance of harnessing diversity in CP (2.2.4).

2.2.1 Central Tenets of Critical Pedagogy

CP, as a philosophy of education, can be viewed as both a theoretical resource and a productive practice and takes as its starting point the belief that education and its goals should be oriented around the individuals themselves. This entails creating curricula that are relevant to students' lives and situations that enable a sense of agency in learners, enabling them to critically examine the social, political and economic moments in which they live (Giroux, 2011; Darder et al., 2017). As part of a continuing critical 'praxis' involving reflection, dialogue and action (Freire, 1970/2000), critical educators aim both to identify oppressive and marginalising forces at work in educational settings and to reflect upon their own power and privilege within the education system. With regard to the role of the educator in CP, Kincheloe et al. (2011) suggest that they should not be viewed as the providers of truth or commodified knowledge but rather as learners whose ability to conduct research and empower themselves should be considered key to supporting students in their own learning (Kincheloe et al., 2011).

CP has its roots in critical theory. For example, Darder et al. (2017) highlight CP's debt to a Marxian analysis of capitalist society and social theorists such as Gramsci and Foucault, along with progressive educators including Dewey in the United States and Freire in Brazil. CP has also been expanded by several other theories such as critical race, feminist, and postcolonial theory (Darder, 2017). As a result, CP is characterised by a wide range of approaches that differ according to the educational context. McLaren and Kincheloe's (2007) edited volume *Critical Pedagogy: Where Are We Now?*, for example, presents examples of praxis from primary to adult education, including radical critical performance pedagogy situated in post-9/11 America (Denzin, 2007) and critical English language teaching in Korea (Sung, 2007). CP also aims to allow space for disagreements regarding its scope and agenda and represents an ever-evolving terrain in which educators are in a continual process of becoming in relation to their unique pedagogical contexts (Steinberg, 2007).

Although CP does not put forward a homogeneous set of ideas, it is unified in objectives centred around the empowerment of students, supporting them in overcoming constraints both within the classroom and beyond it (McLaren, 1989; Kincheloe et al, 2011; Darder et al., 2017). To that end, it not only promotes the creation of spaces where students can come to understand themselves as historically situated but also aims to further an understanding that knowledge and power are produced in specific historical contexts by human beings and can therefore also be changed by human action (Giroux, 2011; Darder et al., 2017). This stance reflects the belief that no education is politically neutral. As McLaren explains,

> schooling always represents an introduction to, preparation for, and legitimation of particular forms of social life. It is always implicated in relations of power, social practices, and the favoring of forms of knowledge that support a specific vision of past, present, and future. (McLaren, 1989: 161-162)

The political role that CP plays here is in exposing some of the taken-for-granted nature of what is transmitted in educational contexts, revealing that the status quo does not necessarily need to be perpetuated and that other ways of living are possible. For example, Bartolomé (2007), in a study of teacher education in the United States, has demonstrated how exposing prospective teachers to critical pedagogical principles enabled them to uncover their own ideological positioning and become aware of asymmetrical power relations in their own contexts. This in turn empowered them to create strategies to overcome discriminatory and dehumanising educational conditions and practices. Critical educators Giroux (2011) and De Lissovoy (2013) have highlighted the ways in which neoliberalism stifles emancipatory learning through the deployment of accountability measures and the scoring of student achievement, redefining education's goals “through the promise of economic growth, job training, and mathematical utility” (Giroux, 2011: 5). Critically examining educational practices and contexts and uncovering the ideologies that shape educators' own lives can therefore be considered a first step towards imagining other possibilities that do not recreate a discriminatory status quo or serve the culture of the dominant class.

CP has drawn critique from a variety of quarters, notably from feminist scholars such as Ellsworth (1989) and Lather (1998) who challenge the emphasis on cognitive reasoning they identify in CP and argue for the inclusion of narratives, personal pedagogical experience and other more embodied ways of knowing that empower all members of an educational community. Feminists and critics of colour have also challenged CP's failure to address questions of race, gender and sexuality in education (Darder et al., 2017). More recently though, CP has replied by expanding to address these concerns in a variety of cultural contexts, a move that is evidenced by their inclusion in the edited volume *Critical Pedagogy in the Twenty-First Century: A New Generation of Scholars* (Mallot and Porfilio, 2011) and the third edition of *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (Darder et al., 2017). CP has also been critiqued as elitist for a perceived reliance on unnecessarily inaccessible language, potentially excluding those most affected by social inequality (Darder et al., 2017). Furthermore, it has been pointed out that whilst CP aims to illuminate politics and ideology, CP is itself an ideological

construct and must direct the same critical scrutiny inwards (Brookfield, 1995; Darder, 2017). For critically reflective teachers, Brookfield (1995) also warns that a reliance on the literature of CP can be demotivating: for one thing, critical theory cannot provide all the answers to complex pedagogical questions as it does not, for example, take into account the many individual psychological factors at play in teaching and learning. Furthermore, Brookfield (1995) also suggests that educators may become uncritically gripped by critical theory and create unrealistic expectations for themselves and their students as a result.

Nevertheless, CP has successfully been employed in higher education settings, as reported by critical educators such as hooks (1994) and Shor (1996). These scholars demonstrate how CP has transformative potential in undergraduate seminar rooms, countering the boredom and disconnection experienced by some students and transforming knowledge from a commodity to be consumed into student agency that is created together in dialogue and mutual development. CP appears to have the potential to counteract disengagement in HE by creating the necessary space for critical dialogue and promoting agency and social responsibility (Giroux, 2011). The following sections deal with aspects of CP that are particularly relevant in this respect, developed from the work of a variety of progressive educators.

2.2.2 Democracy and Agency in the Seminar Room and Beyond

As briefly outlined above, CP works both to uncover inequalities in power in educational settings and develop agency in learners, empowering them to play their part in creating a more just society and furthering democratic participation within and beyond the classroom. Democracy, however, can be conceived in different ways, and Carr (2011), Giroux (2011) and Kincheloe et al. (2011), amongst other critical theorists, question the assumption that citizens living in countries such as Australia, the United States and European Union nations are living in 'unproblematically' democratic and free societies. Whilst citizens of these countries generally have the right to vote in elections and referenda, many fail to do so, and this phenomenon may be linked to the fact that too few are active in influencing the choices that are on offer. Jan-Werner Müller (2016)

argues that the current rise of populism in the Unites States and Europe rides on the broken promises of democracy, with populist leaders garnering support as they attack the governing elites and purport to represent 'the people'. The populist conception of 'the people', though, is fundamentally antipluralist and excludes all political opponents, thereby rendering it a danger to a democratic society which “requires pluralism and the recognition that we need to find fair terms of living together as free, equal, but also irreducibly diverse citizens” (Müller, 2016: 3).

In contrast, critical educators share a substantive conception of democracy that involves the equal participation of all groups in society, within which individual wants and preferences are translated and transformed into collective needs and the common good is served. Indeed, Carr (2011) argues that critical pedagogy offers a framework for the development of democracy since it seeks to critique power and inequality and develop all students as critical agents who are capable of participating in and working towards a democracy that serves the interests of all members of a society. When education involves the critical interrogation of forms of power and privilege, a recognition of knowledge as constructed and the cultivation of democratic practices as part of pedagogy, this can have an impact on an individual's ability to participate more fully in democratic life. Indeed, CP has often been positioned as a pedagogy of liberation, emancipation and freedom (Shor and Freire, 1987; Greene, 1988; McLaren, 1989; hooks 1994). For example, Freire's (1970/2005) notion of *conscientization*, the process by which individuals become critically conscious and able to act to shape their own worlds, is framed as the means by which individuals liberate themselves from the constraints that society imposes. Furthermore, Biesta (2010: 130) in his discussion of what constitutes good education, argues that education should be considered “the science and practice of freedom”. In short, pedagogy becomes emancipatory when it equips students with the ability to engage in a critical analysis of the forces at work in shaping their realities and to act against those that oppress and maintain injustice.

Educational philosopher Maxine Greene (1988; 1995) emphasises the importance of collaborative work in the struggle to overcome oppression and limits to

agency. In contrast to conceptions of personal freedoms that are related to individualism and ideas of autonomy which ultimately benefit the wealthy and advantaged, Greene conceptualises freedom as gained in solidarity and collaboration with diverse individuals for the collective good (Greene, 1988). Like Freire and others, Greene (1988: 23) seeks “a vision of education that brings together the need for wide-awakeness with the hunger for community, the desire to know with the wish to understand, the desire to feel with the passion to see”. For Greene, freedom cannot be conceived as an autonomous freedom because people are embedded in memory, history and a sense of community. It is therefore rather a “shared becoming” (ibid.: 133) that can lead to deeper and wider democratic participation, with education having a key role to play in developing agency and solidarity in diversity. Similarly, Biesta (2010: 28) makes the case for a “difficult” notion of freedom, in which personal freedom is always connected to the freedom of others and “being and becoming a subject are thoroughly relational”. For hooks (1994), taking measures to establish a community such as asking students to sit in a circle and to share personal narratives can encourage participation, careful listening, and the recognition of one another's presence in the process of liberatory learning.

Whilst the aims of CP can be considered utopian, it is necessary to remain realistic about what can be achieved both within one course, and by education more generally. CP as the practice of freedom can certainly be seen as transformative for both the individual and society in that it aims to increase collective agency and enable individuals and groups to change the status quo for the greater good rather than socialise people into it in order to uphold it. However, as Giroux (1983) and Shor and Freire (1987) point out, education has its limits and cannot in itself transform society. Additionally, change can often be a long process and teachers can be discouraged if they don't receive immediate affirmation of the success of their pedagogy. It is therefore important to bear in mind that some small changes and phases that students undergo may nevertheless be seeds for transformation that can only be identified at a later point in an individual's life (Shor and Freire, 1987; hooks, 1994). Furthermore, it is necessary to understand that students may take time to embrace the challenges of a critical classroom or resist moves that challenge their

expectations of teaching and learning (Giroux, 1983). In sum, while CP aims to create the conditions for a more socially just form of democracy, I agree with McLaren's (1989: 190) assertion that, “[t]eachers can do no better than to create agendas of possibility in their classrooms”.

2.2.3 Knowledge and 'Situated Pedagogy'

Among critical educators, knowledge is viewed as socially constructed and therefore does not transcend the cultural and historical context in which it is produced. As opposed to theories of education which regard knowledge as certain and stable, CP takes a dialectic approach to knowledge and seeks to uncover the way that it is bound up in cultural norms and specific social contexts (McLaren, 1989; Darder et al., 2017). From this perspective, the individual and society are mutually constitutive and the individual learners are central in any analysis: experience, in all its contradictions, is central to making sense of the world in which we live (McLaren, 1989; Giroux, 2011). Giroux (2011) maintains that if educators take as a starting point the personal experience, histories and other resources that students bring to the classroom, learners can make meaningful connections to what is being taught and are also able to connect their knowledge to wider social problems and challenges beyond the classroom. Thus, all learners are viewed as bringing something unique and valuable to the table and, in creating a collaborative community in which all voices can be heard in their diversity, learning can become a process of inquiry centred around dialogue and the co-construction of knowledge.

Rather than focussing on the development of predefined learning objectives and standardised course content and assessment that characterise the instrumental dimensions of HE, CP advocates fluidity within curricula and a 'situated pedagogy' that gives students more influence over what is studied and therefore also over the knowledge created (Shor and Freire, 1987). One example of this is Sameshima's (2009) work to advance ethical, critical dialogue in education. In her “pedagogy of parallax” she encourages educators to stop conceiving the teacher as a conduit of knowledge, “the knower at the front of the room”, and to stop thinking of lessons as consumable commodities (Sameshima, 2009: 12). In

place of this, she suggests curricula should be designed in the way a host prepares a party: “We welcome the guests, and the company personally makes meaning and enjoys what they will” (ibid.). As will be discussed further in Chapter 3, this is rather the approach I tried to take in designing my own IC course, where learning was seen to begin with the students' own ideas, experiences and our shared environment.

In general, CP shifts the emphasis from the teachers to the students, giving them the opportunity to ask questions and the space to get together and share ideas. However, the educator is still key to enabling this process and Shor and Freire (1987) advise against creating an atmosphere of laissez-faire in which the students have no responsibilities to the class. As they point out, it is not possible to teach participation *without* participation, which clearly draws attention to the need for students to be present and actively involved in classroom activities in order to learn through dialogue and increase the solidarity and community necessary for human agency.

2.2.4 Harnessing Diversity in Critical Pedagogy

A number of critical scholars have developed their work with multicultural education in mind and Greene (1988), McLaren (1989), hooks (1994) and Giroux (2011) all deal with the possibilities that an engaged pedagogy, as described above, holds for overcoming racism and sexism in the classroom and beyond. CP therefore also appears well-placed to harness the potential of diversity in intercultural classrooms, where encountering differences in values and outlooks can enable students to recognise alternative possibilities for the worlds they know. The celebration of difference and diversity also involves welcoming dissent into the classroom as part of the spirit of intellectual openness, allowing students to take responsibility for their own choices, including how they engage in the classroom (hooks, 1994). Phipps and Guilherme (2004) also consider dissent crucial for CP in an intercultural context, arguing that intercultural consensus and harmony has been wrongly positioned as the main goal of IC. Instead, they maintain that

> [c]ompetencies for intercultural interaction entail the capacity to deal critically and successfully with dissent and even conflict through critical cultural awareness towards the Self and the Other and through honest and balanced negotiation. (Phipps and Guilherme, 2004: 3)

When a shared sense of community and openness in the classroom is created, students are more able to engage with and learn from difference, opening up possibilities for them to share perspectives and move into what Greene (1988: 12) refers to as "intersubjective space". For an educator, this might necessitate the creation of a "fun, risky, brave, scaffolded safety" (Phipps and Gonzalez, 2004: 88) in which conflict and dissent are harnessed in a shared commitment to learning and the common good, in turn stimulating deeper questioning and the establishment of deeper cultural democracy in the classroom. An example of this is Crosbie's (2014) insider-practitioner case study into ESOL pedagogy in a class at an HE institute in Ireland. Her course *English and Globalisation* approached globalisation from a social justice and critical cosmopolitan perspective in which students' intercultural group research and presentations were seen as "opening their eyes and minds to new ways of thinking and acting" (Crosbie, 2014: 37). In this way, the assimilation of students into a homogeneous classroom culture can be avoided, with neither unity nor difference being sacrificed for the other.

2.3 Intercultural Communication (IC) Pedagogy

This section provides some background to the field of IC, with particular focus on the critical turn in IC scholarship and the ways this translates into a critical intercultural communication pedagogy (CICP) that builds on the principles of critical pedagogy outlined above. Although strands of IC pedagogy have been informed by CP for some time, the acronym CICP is fairly recent (e.g. Atay and Toyosaki, 2017; Sobré, 2017). The section is structured in five subsections. Section 2.3.1 outlines the main concerns in the field of IC, locating the research within an expanding field. Section 2.3.2 demarcates the critical turn in IC studies and section 2.3.3 discusses CICP, demonstrating how it differs from skills-based, pragmatic approaches to IC pedagogy and presenting some examples of

practice. Section 2.3.4 then examines some of the mainstream conceptions of intercultural competence that are deployed in IC pedagogy in HE, while section 2.3.5 presents alternative pedagogical goals for a critical approach to IC in the form of "intercultural praxis" (Sorrells, 2013) and critical conceptions of cosmopolitanism.

2.3.1 The Field of Intercultural Communication (IC)

As a field of study and teaching, IC is complex, largely because of its wide scope and multidisciplinary roots, with anthropology, communication, cultural studies, education, linguistics, psychology and sociology amongst the academic disciplines contributing to scholarship (Zhu, 2011; Jackson, 2014). Although a variety of definitions of IC therefore exist, Zhu offers the following broad definition of the field:

> Intercultural communication, as a field of enquiry, is concerned with how people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds interact with each other, and what impact such interactions have on group relations, as well as individuals' identity, attitudes and behaviour. (Zhu, 2011: 1)

The complexity of the field, and interest in it, has increased as the world has become increasingly interconnected through processes of globalisation and the advances made in transportation and communication technologies (Jackson, 2014). Human migration has also led to more interaction with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and there has been an increasing focus on ethics in intercultural communication, in particular in response to the precarious situation of refugees and asylum seekers. HE is also responding to forces of globalisation and in many countries focus has increasingly been placed on internationalisation both at home and in study abroad programmes (ibid.). This has led to the creation of courses designed to develop interculturally competent individuals who can interact effectively in intercultural encounters and compete in the global marketplace, and in efforts to attract students from

other countries (ibid.).

Approaches to researching and teaching IC differ depending on the background and concerns of interculturalists and their students. Zhu (2011) identifies six major dimensions that traverse the study of intercultural communication, two of which are particularly relevant for this study. Firstly, as a graduate in foreign languages and an English language practice teacher at a German university, the inclusion of the cultural dimension as part of foreign language pedagogy drove the original course conception. However, the IC course that I teach (detailed in Chapter 3) and this research are now more aligned with a critical and emancipatory approach to IC pedagogy. In this alternative dimension, cultural differences are not static or given but constructed through discursive practices, with speakers constantly negotiating their own cultural identities. However, as Díaz and Dasli (2017) have argued, the critical turn in IC scholarship owes much to work done in foreign language pedagogy (e.g. Guilherme (2002) and Phipps and Gonzalez (2004)) and so the work of many scholars and also this thesis span both these dimensions.

Holliday (2012) and Díaz and Dasli (2017) outline two opposing views of society, language and culture that divide much of the literature on IC. The first view can be characterised as essentialist in that culture is regarded as consisting in fixed traits that are evidenced in members of a particular society. National groups are often taken as exemplary and the values of that group are presented as given and static. Hofstede's (1991; 2001) attempt to categorise cultural values and belief systems is often held as exemplary of such a perspective, with the 'cultural dimensions' his research identified drawn along national lines. In such an approach, national values and belief systems are seen as perpetuated through socialisation processes with the individual having little active role in deciding how their identity is created. This approach can certainly be considered convenient for understanding cultural differences and its influence can particularly be felt in intercultural business communication and organisation management circles and is still widely applied in intercultural training in business. In Germany, for example. this view of culture is evident in the IC sections of the popular Business English magazine *Business Spotlight*, and much

of the work of the German branch of the Society for Intercultural Education Training and Research (SIETAR). However, this approach has been much criticised for being reductionist in its view of culture and for serving to perpetuate unhelpful stereotypes (Piller, 2011). Moreover, much of the current scholarship and training that claims to be liberal and non-essentialising is in fact neo-essentialist because, as Holliday (2011) argues, it attempts to go beyond nation-state conceptualisations of culture but nevertheless employs categories of difference to cultural groups.

The opposing approach constitutes the more recent critical turn in IC, including the simultaneous development of CICP. This alternative paradigm is presented in the following sections and better represents the view of IC that underpins the pedagogy informing this study.

2.3.2 The Critical Turn in Intercultural Communication Studies

Although Holliday (2012) claims that the neo-essentialist paradigm outlined above is still dominant in both the academy and everyday approaches to IC, there does seem to be a growing trend to eschew positivist approaches to the study of IC and a move towards scholarship that more reflects current global concerns (MacDonald & O'Regan, 2012; Jackson, 2014; Dasli and Díaz, 2017b). Sobré (2017: 40) situates critical intercultural communication as "an embodied form of intercultural scholarship and activism that sees culture and communication as mutually constitutive, contested, situated in and requiring responses to systemic power imbalances". Framed in this way, two central concerns of a critical approach to IC become apparent: an understanding of culture as a site of struggle and an understanding of IC as taking place against a backdrop of global inequality.

With regard to culture, critical IC scholars do not view culture as a static, apprehendable entity defined by national boundaries, but see it rather as socially constructed on individual and global levels through complex interaction in "an active process of meaning-making" (Dasli and Díaz, 2017b: xiv). In the critical turn, culture is viewed as a site of struggle involving situated power

interests and ideologies that are reflected in interaction and the discursive construction of identity. If culture is viewed as embodied understandings of how to be in the world which are constantly in flux, it can be claimed that culture is a social practice rather than an entity in itself, reflected in Street's (1993) notion of "culture as a verb". Thus, culture and IC become dynamic social concepts and practices rather than entities that can be fixed and objectively examined (Holliday, 2011; Piller, 2011).

This view of culture as socially constructed and in continual negotiation on micro and macro levels brings into focus the second concern of the critical IC scholarship, namely its position in a world in which inequality across countries and cultures is increasing and fundamental inequalities in access to power can exist between participants in intercultural encounters (Shi-xu and Wilson, 2001; Sorrells, 2013). As with other critical discourses, the critical turn in IC therefore requires researchers to commit to an agenda of social justice rather than take a neutral position. In identifying and tackling global inequalities that impact on IC and working towards social inclusion and justice, critical IC scholarship can be said be moving towards a "new ethics that have the potential to improve the multicultural and transnational societies in which we now live" (Dasli and Díaz, 2017b: xiii-xiv). This turn requires researchers to engage with these issues, examining the power interests at play in intercultural encounters and in research, including asking the question, as Piller (2011: 174) puts it, of "who makes culture relevant to whom in which context for which purposes?". The following section discusses the implications of this critical turn for IC pedagogy.

2.3.3 Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP)

The critical turn in IC scholarship has encouraged intercultural educators to consider its translation into pedagogy, with Sobré (2017), for example, arguing that political movements such as #blacklivesmatter and events such as the Syrian refugee crisis highlight the urgency of a programme of CICP. Although critical approaches to IC pedagogy have existed for some time (see, for example, Shi-xu and Wilson (2001) and Phipps and Guilherme (2004)), CICP itself is a relatively recent term employed by scholars such as Toyosaki and Atay (2017), Halualani

(2017) and Sobré (2017) which draws together a variety of critical, social-justice oriented approaches to IC pedagogy. This interdisciplinary field of research and practice draws on critical perspectives such as critical communication studies and critical pedagogy, and is committed to a dialogical and self-reflexive approach to uncovering and countering socio-cultural inequality, both within and beyond HE (Halualani, 2011; Toyosaki and Atay, 2017). In foreign language and IC pedagogy, Guilherme (2002), Phipps and Gonzalez (2004) and Piller (2011) are among the scholars who have infused pedagogy with critical principles in a reconsideration of the purpose of language and IC education. CICP therefore recognises the socially-constructed, fluid nature of culture and the power networks that frame critical IC scholarship and is indebted to the theorising of progressive, critical educational philosophies. Encouraging criticality in students of IC involves developing cognitive skills and attitudes such as self-reflexivity and the ability to evaluate arguments but goes beyond these in adding ethical and political components to this notion. As Halualani (2011) notes, a critical conception of IC pedagogy pushes the boundaries of intercultural education by requiring educators and students to continually problematise connections between individuals, communities and global politics, and the ways in which culture and IC have been framed.

As with the conceptions of CP outlined earlier, such a critical stance can be viewed as a precondition for engagement in the world that moves beyond questioning the status quo and one's beliefs and assumptions and towards imagining and working for a society that is more just and democratic and in which individuals are less alienated (Dasli and Díaz, 2017b). In intercultural education, Gorski (2008) argues that educators must work to shift their own consciousness, teaching in ways that are explicitly political and working against essentialist notions of culture and the process of othering. Such a pedagogical approach can constitute “a transformative endeavour unembarrassed by the label ‘political’ and unafraid to consummate a relationship with emancipatory consciousness” (Kincheloe et al., 2011: 164).

Contributing towards the development of critically aware and socially responsible individuals is perhaps particularly urgent in the current global

political climate in which the UNHCR reports over 65 million forcibly displaced people and which simultaneously sees a populist resurgence in nationalism in the form of xenophobia, culturism and wall-building. In Germany, for example, the far-right, nationalist political party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) won 12.6% of the vote in the 2017 general election, receiving 94 seats and entering the *Bundestag* for the first time as the third largest party (Spiegel Online, 2017). CICP, following CP, challenges educators to find ways to increase autonomy and agency in students so that they themselves can imagine and contribute to more democratic and just society than we currently experience. It also places specific focus on an examination of the ways that notions of culture and theories of IC themselves serve to perpetuate the status quo and "society constructs the foreign Other on our behalf" (Holliday et al., 2010: 39). Piller (2011), for example, is concerned that the surge in popularity of IC research and training could itself constitute a worrying development rather than cause for celebration as the resulting reification of culture and cultural groups in the neo-essentialist paradigm resonates with populist feeling and racist politics: to see 'culture' as a way of explaining differences between members of various groups can be considered morally dubious since it perpetuates a worldview which encourages us to believe that cultural differences are responsible for inequality.

This appears a worrying dimension of IC pedagogy that should be acknowledged and addressed by critical educators. In an attempt to move away from a pedagogy that views culture as a product and commodity to be studied, Sobré (2017) lists perspectives and theories in IC pedagogy that would link an examination of global injustice with interpersonal interaction, highlighting the ways in which social and political forces impact on IC on an individual level. For Sobré, a critical IC class-space should challenge conceptions of culture as based on nation-state and the "West vs. Rest" mentality that dominates the neo-essentialist paradigm in IC scholarship (Sobré, 2017: 41). It should also analyse uneven forces of globalisation, include discussions of critical race theory, White privilege and post-colonialism, and examine identity forces such as intersectionality. The inclusion of a social justice component that highlights individual agency in facilitating change is also considered necessary (ibid.). It is quite an agenda, and not one that I attempt to implement in an introductory

course for non-native speakers of English that spans a single university semester, but these suggestions can nevertheless serve as an orientation for educators. Sobré (2017: 56) states that “CICP teaches us that critical intercultural communication cannot be seen as simply one way through which to understand the discipline, but that once its light has illuminated systemic injustices, intercultural communication cannot be seen in any other way”. This is the position I also find myself in, and therefore believe that even the short, introductory IC course I offer must be oriented in this way. Nonetheless, Halualani (2017) warns that critical intercultural scholars as a community have yet to overcome an overly pragmatic and limiting instrumentalist approach to pedagogy that still ignores structural inequalities and global social inequality in favour of developing “global skill sets” (ibid.: 5). She encourages critical scholars to interrogate the extent to which their own pedagogical practice undermines unequal intercultural power relations and can truly be termed critical.

Despite Halualani's (2017) observation that many critical scholars are largely still teaching IC in a skills-based, pragmatic approach, CICP does appears to have been successfully enacted in a variety of settings. For example, in one case study, Sobré (2017) took an autoethnographic approach to examining her own intercultural communication pedagogy in an HE setting. Following Hansen (2010) and Sobré-Denton and Bardhan (2013), the course in question combined didactic, experiential and reflective elements and encouraged students to take the intercultural knowledge they developed and apply it “as a means of engaging in interventions that stand up for the oppressed, work to illuminate systemic injustices and work for change” (Sobré, 2017: 52). The course took students' own histories, cultural identities and experiences of stereotypes as starting points for activities that appeared to help them understand power and privilege in intercultural communication. Such an approach would seem to represent a valuable, process-based form of CICP that aims to equip students with the awareness and motivation to act to counter injustice in their own lives and beyond (Sobré, 2017).

In a further example, Yulita's (2017) case study into the use of fiction as part of

a CICP in a foreign language teaching setting appeared to demonstrate how a short story could be employed to heighten students' awareness of ideologies of gender identities. In class, students were encouraged through a series of steps to connect their own experiences with the literary text and this process appeared to facilitate critical evaluations of their own assumptions, values, beliefs and worldviews (Yulita, 2017). In turn, this consciousness-raising exercise seemed to enable students to harness their own personal biographies and experiences in reflection on their own and others' ideological standpoints (ibid.). These examples have in common their commitment to a CICP which takes students themselves as the starting point for learning. They are also context-dependent and embedded in local settings while also opening out the critical perspective to include a consideration of the impact of and connections to wider historical, systemic and political factors. The examples also stress the importance of self-reflection and a growing self-awareness in students in order that they may be able to make changes to their own perspectives and actions in and beyond the classroom.

Although not labelled CICP, Axtmann's (2002) use of embodied, creative methods in intercultural education, some of which served as inspiration for the tasks undertaken in this study, also works towards a pedagogy that transforms the classroom into a site of sharing and appears to enable students to shift their perspectives as they interact with others. She encouraged students to explore ideas of identity, time and space in practical ways, including creating three-dimensional models of culture and identity collages as part of “transcultural performance in classroom learning” (Axtmann, 2002: 37). Although these scholars have provided and critically examined their own examples of practice, there remains a lack of practical guidance and examples of activities which foster intercultural relationships within the classroom and that are transferable and accessible for undergraduate learners with differing academic backgrounds and levels of language proficiency.

2.3.4 Conceptions of Intercultural Competence

The existence of diverse approaches to IC scholarship unsurprisingly has an

impact on what are regarded as appropriate pedagogical goals. For much IC pedagogy, the development of intercultural communicative competence is the end goal and the existence of a large body of work in this field is reflected in the publication of university handbooks such as *The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence* (2009). Although I do not aim to teach intercultural communicative competence as part of my own course, I do nevertheless ask the students to critically grapple with the notion itself, which in winter semester 2015/16 involved producing a collage which constituted one of the arts-based tasks in this study (see Chapter 4). For this reason, this section briefly outlines some of the mainstream conceptions of intercultural competence, also drawing attention to the critique they have attracted. I discuss Wiseman's (2003) and Chen and Starosta's (2006) definitions of intercultural competence, the translation of intercultural competence into a graduate attribute, Byram's (1997) and Bennett's (1993) prominent models of intercultural competence, and the drive for consensus in definition.

Mainstream definitions of intercultural competence

In a philosophical reconsideration of the notion of intercultural competence, Ferri (2014: 9) notes that competence training has developed in a variety of contexts such as management, tourism and mediation, and many of the mainstream conceptions of intercultural communicative competence contribute to what can be termed “an intercultural industry”. Most current understandings of intercultural competence centre upon the adaptability and effectiveness of the individual in communicating in intercultural contexts, with learning involving the building of specific knowledge, behaviour and attitudes. For example, IC scholar Richard Wiseman (2003) defines intercultural competence as “the knowledge, motivation and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures” which involves the identification of “meanings, rules and codes for interacting appropriately” (Wiseman, 2003: 192&200). For Chen and Starosta (2006: 357), intercultural scholars who specialise in research into intercultural sensitivity, interculturally competent individuals “know how to elicit a desired response in interactions and to fulfil their own communication goals by respecting and affirming the worldview and cultural identities of the interactants”. Both these definitions foreground adaptability and flexibility in

communication styles but nevertheless essentialise cultural identities and can arguably be considered examples of neo-essentialism to the extent that competence is at least partly seen as being achieved through knowledge of the communicative styles and behavioural patterns that are exhibited by specific cultural groups. Chen and Starosta's (2006) definition in particular appears to reveal the instrumentalist ethos behind widespread notions of intercultural competence, appearing to suggest that competence involves utilising one's intercultural knowledge as the power to achieve one's own goals, regardless of whether these are also advantageous to others.

The translation of intercultural competence into a graduate attribute

In HE, as Jackson (2015) points out, there is growing consensus regarding the importance of "global competence" as a graduate attribute, which Hunter (2004: 101) defines as "having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively outside one's environment". This is similar to the definitions of competence presented above, despite the reference to "an open mind". Whilst such competence may well be useful for graduates, the resultant development of IC courses that are competence-driven arguably reflects the push for competitiveness and employability on the global job market and the neo-liberal discourses that currently dominate HE (Phipps and Gonzalez, 2004; Giroux, 2011; Kennedy et al., 2017).

The University of Düsseldorf is geographically close to the setting of the present study and its *Zertifikat Interkulturelle Kompetenz* (Certificate of Intercultural Competence) represents one example of a university's concern with developing and certifying the intercultural competence of its graduates for their future careers. To achieve this certificate, students need to demonstrate participation in activities in three of four dimensions: experience abroad, language proficiency, intercultural training, and international engagement. Following the criteria outlined on the information sheet (Appendix A), a student could theoretically be certified as interculturally competent after having participated in a week-long intensive language course, attending a diversity management

workshop, and being involved in a buddy or mentoring programme for visiting Erasmus students. Such activities are no doubt valuable and potentially transformative for the individuals involved, but it can be argued that the translation of mere participation in these areas into a certificate of intercultural competence ignores the complexity of living and working in intercultural settings and the on-going, open-ended development of an individual.

Byram's (1997) and Bennett's (1993) models of intercultural competence

From a wider perspective, two of the best-known models of intercultural competence are Byram's (1997) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence and M.J. Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). In language pedagogy, Byram's (1997) model has been crucial in bringing the cultural element into foreign language teaching and learning. Beyond the linguistic elements identified as requisite for communicative competence in a language, Byram cites five *savoirs* as components that reflect the cultural dimension of competency for the "intercultural speaker" and which focus on the relational dimensions of communication rather than the mere ability to communicate information clearly. These five components are: intercultural attitudes (*savoir être*), knowledge of the practices of cultural groups (*savoirs*), the skill of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*), skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*), and critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*) (Byram et al., 2002: 12-13). Although Byram's work remains a landmark move in foreign language teaching in its development of intercultural communicative competence, this work has been critiqued for perpetuating an approach to culture that maintains the divide between cultures by incorporating the accumulation of culture-specific knowledge as part of a conception of intercultural communicative competence (Holliday, 2011; Dervin, 2016).

Bennett's (1993) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS) has also been widely employed in research and practice in educational contexts and is based on the idea that intercultural competence results from personal growth. This model tracks the development of a mindset that gradually becomes better able to understand culture from an ethnorelative point of view in which

difference is more readily accepted and reflects the view that identity and culture are socially constructed and subject to change as a result of intercultural contact. However, this model has also been critiqued for not paying enough attention to either local culture or intercultural ethics at a global systemic level (Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013). Furthermore, the model presupposes that 'intercultural sensitivity' can be measured and tested. Thus, the testing tool Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer et al., 2003) was developed to align with the DMIS and is, the developers state, "a 50-item (with 10 additional demographic items), paper-and-pencil measure of intercultural competence" (ibid: 421). This tool can then be "administered" to students to measure, for example, the impact of study abroad programmes on intercultural competence (Jackson, 2015: 78). While this may be very useful for those who wish to justify such pedagogical interventions, the use of such a measurement tool is not aligned with a critical approach to IC pedagogy which resists top-down conceptualisations of competence imposed on students in the drive to produce 'global-ready graduates' for employers.

The drive for consensus in definition

There have also been attempts to bring scholars together in a consensus on a definition of competence in IC. Deardorff (2006), for example, surveyed 23 intercultural scholars in order to develop a broad definition of intercultural competence. Similarly, Fantini (2012), pointing to the lack of clarity regarding the nature of intercultural communicative competence, maintains that greater consensus is necessary in order that we may better formulate educational objectives, design courses to develop competence in participants, and determine how to measure its development. From the perspective of critical intercultural pedagogy, critique of the drive for consensus in definitions of intercultural competence, meaningful models and reliable assessment appears to revolve around two main issues. The first is that no model or assessment mode can really take account of "the mess of human relatedness" (Phipps, 2007: 26). As Ferri (2014: 18) puts it, "ultimately the dynamics underpinning communication cannot readily be translated into a formula with practical applications measured by the reliable testing of competencies". The second issue again concerns the top-down imposition on learners of definitions of

culture, IC, and resulting conceptions of intercultural competence. Imposing scholarly definitions on others' performance and development may be useful in that it can produce signs of success in intercultural learning, but it does not constitute personal transformation that takes into account the role of ideology and politics in learning about IC (Phipps, 2010). Ultimately, the kind of personal growth and transformation of individuals and groups that CICP aims for can neither be presented in advance nor easily measured.

2.3.5 Alternative Educational Goals in CICP: "Intercultural Praxis" and Critical Cosmopolitanism

In line with the critical turn in IC scholarship, there have been alternative conceptualisations of pedagogical goals that challenge the mainstream conceptions of intercultural communicative competence outlined above. These often foreground the learning process rather than the products of education (e.g. Phipps and Gonzalez, 2004; Hansen, 2011; Lanas, 2017). Phipps (2010: 68) suggests that intercultural education can offer, at best, "a praxis in discernment" rather than one that aims to provide solutions. In such a praxis, the questions are about whose interests are served by the existence of divisions in society, and who is served by a better understanding of such divisions (Phipps, 2010). The following paragraphs present notions of "intercultural praxis" (Sorrells, 2013) and critical cosmopolitanism as more appropriate pedagogical goals for CICP, but it is important to note that attempting to translate these into pre-defined intended learning outcomes would undermine their critical, process-based potential.

One way of conceptualising intercultural competence as part of CICP can be found in Sorrells' (2013) notion of "intercultural praxis". In "intercultural praxis" intercultural competence is grounded in the struggle for social justice rather than the ability to communicate effectively to order to achieve one's own goals. It involves engaging in a cyclical process of inquiry, framing, positioning, dialogue, reflection and action in order to increase social awareness, develop the ability to critically analyse relations of power, and cultivate the capacity to take socially responsible action (Sorrells, 2013). Sorrells positions such

competence as part of an ethical global citizenship in which individuals and alliances work towards a more equitable world, and, drawing on Freire's work in CP, strongly orients “intercultural praxis” around student empowerment and the critical, reflective thinking that enables us to act (ibid.).

Critical cosmopolitanism provides a second way of imagining the pedagogical ambitions of CICP and is an approach that views global society as a single community with shared responsibilities but very diverse identities. Unlike Sorrells' (2013) notion of “intercultural praxis”, critical cosmopolitanism does not take global citizenship as the intended outcome of pedagogy but regards it rather as a life-long learning process that is focussed on personal interests and transformative intercultural encounters (Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013). Cosmopolitanism is not a new idea but critical conceptions of cosmopolitanism have seen a resurgence in IC scholarship (Kennedy et al., 2017). Unlike many traditional forms of IC pedagogy, critical cosmopolitanism does not aim to smooth over or overcome difference through effective and appropriate communication. Instead, the focus is on an openness to difference and the harnessing of dialogue to work collaboratively against social injustice (Holliday, 2012; Sobré, 2017). Cultures in this perspective are kept open, with territorial boundaries broken down and individuals and communities working transnationally in solidarity with one another (Holliday, 2011; Díaz and Dasli, 2017). Sobré-Denton and Bardhan (2013) reject the idea of a conclusive definition of cosmopolitanism, arguing, in line with other critical approaches, that to impose one would obstruct its open-ended and unfolding potential. They instead present the concept as a philosophy and moral vision for being in the world and relating to cultural Others, arguing that this entails:

> a deep appreciation for difference, the willingness to engage with cultural Others and be transformed by such experiences, kindness towards strangers, and the labour of the imagination to envision a world that aspires towards peace, possibilities and intercultural respect for those near and far. (Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013: 7)

Holliday (2011) argues that people from all cultural backgrounds have the potential to dialogue with cultural Others and transcend national boundaries, becoming enriched and enriching the cultural practices they encounter. As a starting point for dialogue that does not try to 'overcome' difference, Hansen (2011: 2) advocates a critical cosmopolitan approach towards IC that focusses on "the value of valuing", arguing that we can bond in our shared commitment to our own values and beliefs and create dialogue, recognising this shared capacity "as a renewed basis for mutual understanding and cooperation". This form of communicative action also allows for an individual's cultural identity to shift through the development of new allegiances and changes to ways of acting (Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013). Translated into pedagogy, critical cosmopolitanism should therefore be dialogic and focus on the interconnections between the local and the global, foster multiple perspective-taking to encourage empathy, and include a commitment to pluralism (Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013). It is not necessary to travel across nation-state borders to enact cosmopolitan values: we are experiencing diversity in our own neighbourhoods and increased possibilities for intercultural contact across the globe thanks to advances in communication technologies. Critical cosmopolitanism as part of education is therefore positioned as a way of enabling individuals to function both as part of a local community and simultaneously take a global perspective. As Sobré-Denton and Bardhan (2013: 170) put it, "cosmopolitanism's values should be made locally relevant, even as they are performed on a world stage".

Aiming for cosmopolitanism in HE can contribute to the emancipatory purpose of education advocated in CP. However, like other emancipatory discourses, the concept of cosmopolitanism has also been co-opted and become a neoliberal buzzword in discourse about internationalisation in HE (Sidhu and Dall'Alba, 2012; Kennedy et al., 2017). For this reason, it is important to retain the critical dimension of the concept and recognise the value of the cosmopolitanism as a process rather than an end goal (Skrbiš and Woodward, 2013). Critical conceptions of cosmopolitanism best reflect my own hopes for the students I teach, perhaps because I aim for cosmopolitanism as a way of life myself. However, this also entails critically engaging with the concept itself, and, to return to a recurring theme, accepting that it cannot be forced, top-down, on

others: as Hansen (2011) argues, cosmopolitanism is an orientation to a life rather than a mission. Although I do not impose them on others, cosmopolitan values do reflect my attitude towards the community of students in the course and the class space we inhabit, and this in turn has a significant impact on how we approach the subject of IC together. Chapter 3 describes in more detail how the principles of CICP translated into classroom practice for this case study.

The next section examines the potential of creative tasks for learning, with particular focus on the features that appear best aligned with the goals of CICP. This discussion is first situated in a wider discussion about the role of creativity in HE.

2.4 Conceiving Arts-Inspired, Creative Learning for CICP in HE

This section outlines the rationale for deploying creative, arts-inspired tasks as part of a critical intercultural communication pedagogy. Arts-based learning has been shown to work in a variety of valuable ways for intercultural education, and community arts projects in particular have harnessed its potential to promote social cohesion and intercultural dialogue. Gonçalves and Majhanovich's (2016) edited volume *Art and Intercultural Dialogue,* for example, details examples of the ways in which films, exhibitions and festivals have been shown to foster intercultural cooperation and communication in international settings. *The Routledge Handbook of Intercultural Arts Research* (Burnard et al., 2016) also provides a multitude of examples of the ways in which arts have been mobilised in intercultural contexts, from music teacher education (Aróstegui and Ibarretxe, 2016) to reflexive medical praxis (Tulinius and Hibble, 2006). However, there is little research to suggest that arts-inspired tasks are being harnessed for the teaching of IC in HE and it is this gap that my research aims to fill.

The section is divided into seven subsections and organised as follows: 2.4.1 Conceiving Creativity starts by providing some background, considering the way that creativity has been understood in general terms and then examining how it

is constructed by those interested in creative learning and teaching. In section 2.4.2 A Closer Look at Tensions in Conceptions, Interests and Goals of Creativity in Education I then consider some of the tensions between institutional/governmental policy and the views of educators regarding the purposes of creative education and briefly outline how I understand creativity in my own pedagogical praxis. Engaging in arts-inspired tasks represents a particular mode of creativity and the potential of these tasks for learning and CICP more specifically is therefore examined from four different perspectives. Thus, section 2.4.3 Harnessing Artistic Processes for Learning discusses the potential of artistic tasks for helping individuals stabilise and make sense of ideas and embodied knowledge, while section 2.4.4 Accessing the Imagination in Arts-Inspired Tasks considers how artistic tasks can encourage students to use their imaginations for self-reflection and positive change. Section 2.4.5 The Potential of Collaborative Creativity examines the valuable social aspects of creative activity and section 2.4.6 Conceiving Arts-Inspired Critical Reflection for CICP discusses the forms of critical refection for CICP that artistic tasks may foster. Although arts-inspired tasks may have potential for learning, they are not without pitfalls and limitations. Section 2.4.7 Some Critique and Drawbacks of Creative Arts-Inspired Tasks for Learning therefore presents a number of criticisms that have been made of such activities.

2.4.1 Conceiving Creativity

Understandings of creativity are as varied as conceptions of culture and IC, in part due to the variety of disciplines in which creativity has been employed and investigated, and can also greatly depend on the cultural context in which they are developed (Craft, 2006). For example, Boden, a cognitive scientist, defines creativity as “the ability to come up with ideas or artefacts that are new, surprising, and valuable” (Boden, 2010: 29) while in social psychology Amabile et al. (1996: 1155) summarised creativity as “the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain”. Hallam and Ingold (2007), both anthropologists, reject the focus on novel creative 'products' implied in such conceptions, arguing that creativity has far more to do with processes and is found in improvisation in the creative process rather than innovation as evidenced in a novel product. There

are also disagreements about whether creativity is an extraordinary capacity residing only in talented individuals, or an ordinary, everyday tool that is available to all. In education, however, the prevailing view appears to be that creativity is a fundamental part of human existence and a capacity that can be developed in everyone. Characterised by some scholars as 'little 'c' creativity' (Craft, 2001), or 'systematic' creativity as opposed to 'romantic' creativity (Odena, 2012), this less elitist view of creativity can leave room for creative learning to be ordinary in the sense that the capacity to engage in creative processes is shared by everyone, whilst simultaneously extraordinary in the way it can break routine and disrupt normative or reductive ways of learning.

Some scholars warn of the uncritical ways in which the term 'creativity' is employed, and the extent to which it can be stretched to cover a multitude of phenomena: in academia and for educational policy-making, reference to 'creativity' as a concept has become so universal and carries so much baggage that its use has become problematic and it runs the risk of becoming a meaningless concept (Sefton-Green and Bresler, 2011; MacLaren, 2012). For example, if creativity is considered an unexceptional, everyday phenomenon that is centred around the freedom to make choices, anything that a student does that it not entirely teacher-directed could be considered creative. As a consequence of the fuzziness of the concept, it seems necessary to consider how creativity is conceived in pedagogical praxis, with a particular focus on HE. However, rather than relying on specific, static definitions, conceptions of 'creativity', like 'culture' in the previous section, are more productively viewed as shifting and fluid and constructed through discourse in different educational contexts by different groups of people (Jackson, 2006; Banaji, 2011).

Several scholars have investigated conceptions of creativity amongst academics (e.g. Edwards et al., 2006; Jackson and Shaw, 2006), all demonstrating the variety and tensions in the way creativity is understood. Kleiman's (2008) analysis of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 12 academics from a variety of disciplines, all teaching in HE, produced an enlightening preliminary 'conceptual map' of their conceptions of the creative experience in teaching and learning, where five key aspects emerged. Some academics saw creativity as

process-focused, possibly leading to intangible outcomes, or no apparent outcome at all, while others rather viewed creativity as *producing* something novel. Between these two categories there was a great deal of overlap however: for some academics, creative processes were intrinsically linked to tangibles outcomes, or 'products', demonstrating how “creativity can slide between 'looking' (process) and 'finding' or 'creating' (product)” (Kleiman, 2008: 213). A third category identified creativity in teaching and learning as a transformation-focused experience, where risk-taking and the exploitation of chance and opportunity played important roles. The fourth category linked creativity with personal investment and fulfilment, where freedom was significant. Interestingly, the fifth category saw creativity conceptualised in opposition to constraint, as “a form of resistance to compliance and orthodoxy” (ibid.: 212). Kleiman notes here that there is perhaps a binary relationship between creativity and constraint, where the one, to some extent, relies upon the existence of the other. The implication of this finding is that, perhaps counter-intuitively, creating the right environment for creativity to flourish may not involve providing groups or individuals with carte blanche to do as they wish, but instead requires the imposition of certain limits and constraints on the creative process.

Kleiman's emergent conclusions are also interesting. Among them, he notes that the creative experience is often conceived by academics as a way of resisting “the constraints and frustrations of daily academic life” (Kleiman, 2008: 216). Perhaps more importantly for pedagogy, the transformative and self-actualising aspects of creativity were central to the academics' conceptions of the creative experience, whilst notions of utility, present in many definitions of creativity, were not foregrounded. This, Kleiman points out, both challenges conventional approaches to pedagogy and places academics' conceptions of creativity at odds with institutional or governmental policies which situate creativity in HE settings as a way to boost productivity all round and ultimately benefit the economy (ibid.).

2.4.2 A Closer Look at Tensions in Conceptions, Interests and Goals of Creativity in Education

Kleiman's (2008) analysis is also indicative of the tensions Sefton-Green et al. (2011) identify in the overarching aims of creative learning, where varying conceptions of creativity reflect the differences in positioning and pedagogical goals of those interested in either developing and/or harnessing creativity. In one perspective, creative teaching and learning can be conceived as teaching *for* creativity, whereby pedagogy aims to develop creative and innovative individuals who can contribute to "the knowledge economy". In this perspective,

> [t]he imperative for creativity is allied to the neo-liberal restructuring of capital in terms of both the need for new products for new markets to ensure continuous growth through the turnover of novelties and shifts to a knowledge economy where especially the exploitation of intellectual property is another engine for wealth creation. (Sefton-Green and Bresler 2011: 12)

Craft (2006: 27), in her study of creativity in schools, also argues that official conceptions of creativity in education are overwhelmingly "marketised" in this way, with creativity conflated with innovation and serving an endless drive to innovate further. This is very much a product-focussed view of creativity where the educational potential of creativity with regard to, for example, identity development, is either secondary or slips entirely out of view. This perspective is also represented in the *Creativity in higher education; Report on the EUA [European University Association] creativity project 2006-7* (2007) which urges university leaders and governments to focus on creativity in HE for "[p]rogress towards a knowledge-based society and economy" (EUA, 2007: 6).

Unsurprisingly, some scholars are critical of such goals. For example, Iain MacLaren, Director of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at the National University of Ireland, wonders whether the discourse around promoting creativity in individuals is rather about "conformity and enculturation into the dominant socio-politico-cultural norms and the market economy, than about

realising the transformative potential of education" (MacLaren, 2012: 162). An alternative perspective of creativity in education does indeed foreground its transformative potential and positions creativity not as an end goal, but rather embedded in teaching and learning processes. According to Kleiman (2008), this is rather the conception of creativity widely held by those who teach in HE. Creative pedagogy is, in this alternative conception, often framed in opposition to constraining forces in education, and is, like critical pedagogy, concerned with destabilising notions of authority and knowledge in education, and making learning more relevant, engaging and fulfilling. From this perspective, creative learning is characterised as open-ended and having the potential to lead to change or to transformation, whether that be at an individual, classroom or institutional level (Sefton-Green et al., 2011). For example, James and Brookfield (2014) provide numerous examples that show how creative processes can be harnessed in HE for reflective learning rather than the creation of valuable innovative products. In one instance, modelling with Lego was used to facilitate international students' transition to Design, Business or Media degree programmes in the UK, helping them make sense of their experiences studying in the UK. On another occasion, students created reflective postcards that visually expressed the connections that they were making and skills they were developing within a course designed to prepare them for HE. The process of making these postcards was found to have facilitated a synthesis of learning, helping students connect theory with practice. James and Brookfield (2014) also detail how labyrinths were used at the University of Kent to facilitate discussion and collaborative reflection, in one case fostering the exploration of professional and personal values for those engaged in educational development.

The two visions of creative learning outlined above are not necessarily mutually exclusive and are often linked in the very broad ways that creativity in education is conceived. So, the desire to increase graduate employability by developing creativity in students is not necessarily in conflict with pedagogy that aims foster autonomy, critical reflection and personal development, as some of the examples discussed within this chapter show. Nonetheless, as some scholars argue, the fact that current neo-liberal education practice and policies have marketised creativity, linking it with economic value, means that there remains a

significant tension between pedagogy that aims to develop creativity to help students fulfil the requirements of the current economic climate and pedagogy that views creative learning as facilitating social critique, cultural democracy and self-actualisation (Jones, 2011; MacLaren, 2012; Peters, 2014). Jones (2011) argues that transformative conceptions of creative learning are present, but that marketised versions of creativity have become hegemonic:

> Prominent for two centuries, conceptions of creativity that rest on some concept of social antagonism and critique have been quite rapidly marginalised and recuperated by other understandings, in a process that has been one of neo-liberalisation's most interesting achievements. (Jones, 2011: 24)

Nonetheless, in HE, Jackson (2006) recognises that an interest in creativity on the part of practitioners often stems from a desire to fulfil their own value-based, personal and professional needs and is frequently conceived by academics as a form of resistance to constraining and frustrating forces. Indeed, the rationale for promoting creativity in undergraduate seminar rooms is consistent with the goals of CP. For example, both can involve educators seeking to reduce hierarchical relationships in classrooms and working with students to make learning more personally meaningful and engaging. They can also both entail increasing student agency by providing more opportunity for students to critically engage and take control of their own knowledge, resisting the top-down imposition of learning objectives and standardised assessment procedures. MacLaren (2012) suggests that creative pedagogy is flourishing outside and despite official policy, while James and Brookfield (2014) believe that encouraging learning that is creative, imaginative and playful is essential, all the more so because they view many beneficial features of creativity as neglected in HE. With regard to research, Thomson and Sefton-Green (2011: 2) point out that “in the current climate, creative learning research often offers itself as a form of advocacy and frequently engages with understanding the new and the innovative or different practices”. Thus, creative pedagogy can be conceived as a form of CP.

My own conception of creativity depends greatly on the context in which I am applying it. In the IC class, for example, we discuss the creative construction of cultural identity, from which perspective creativity is seen as an everyday practice in which all humans engage (Banaji, 2011). However, in teaching and learning, I rather employ the adjective 'creative' to refer to something that is distinctly out of the ordinary, and that usually, although not exclusively, involves the process of actually creating something tangible or artistic, such as a poem, story or collage. In their overview of the key features of creativity in education, Sefton-Green et al. (2011) note the general consensus that conceptions of creativity share with the Arts a focus on making processes, as I do in this study. Gauntlett (2007) also notes that the 'common sense' understanding of creativity involves making something physical. However, unlike the Arts traditionally, such processes in education are generally conceived as accessible to all rather than available only to those with artistic talent. This can thus be considered a democratic from of creativity, far removed from the idea of creative genius that is attributed to very few.

In this study, I did not employ art-inspired, creative activities to represent disciplinary knowledge or increase academic achievement (although this may be a by-product), but rather as a way to potentially access the students' imagination and tacit knowledge, giving them an opportunity to express their own ideas in a risk-reduced mode. Many facets of engaging in creative, arts-inspired tasks make them attractive for CICP and these are discussed in the following subsections.

2.4.3 Harnessing Artistic Processes for Learning

Much teaching and learning, perhaps particularly in HE, is designed to focus on the intellectual dimensions of learning alone, although scholars such as hooks (1994) and Addison (2011) have drawn attention to the fact that learning can always be considered embodied because we think, feel and act through our bodies and affect and are affected by other bodies. Engagement in artistic, creative processes acknowledges this dimension of learning and has been

claimed to help students make explicit unconscious, embodied knowledge. For example, Simons and Hicks (2006) maintain that involvement in artistic processes helps us make sense of our ideas and experiences and brings into focus tacit knowledge that would otherwise remain unexplored. With particular focus on the potential represented by collaging, Chilton and Scotti (2014: 169) argue that the physical artistic practice involved in cutting, placing, moving and gluing can enable the generation of new metaphors and serve as "a tool of discovery" which "may jar us into new insights, tear apart and reconfigure ideas, and rework old patterns of thought" (ibid.: 170). McNiff (2008: 40) also maintains that the most meaningful insights are generated in the creative process itself and often occur unexpectedly, or "even against the will of the creator". This is an interesting idea because it suggests that artistic endeavours could enable students to access aspects of themselves that they may not have realised exist. In *Creative Explorations*, Gauntlett (2007) examines why this might be the case from the perspective of cognitive science: drawing on theories of consciousness developed first by Carl Jung and more recently by Daniel Dennett, he suggests that most brain activity is unconscious and that creative tasks can help us unearth different, fuller understandings of our experiences. Learning through arts-inspired tasks perhaps therefore has potential for CICP specifically since this view also implies that students may be able to develop and deepen a sense of their own cultural histories and use their experiences to their advantage in learning. Furthermore, Matarasso (2007) suggests that, in their ability to surface and symbolise other possible ways of being and understanding, the embodied experience of working through the arts can reveal to students that myriad choices and paths for their lives exist. Raising consciousness of alternative options can therefore contribute to the development of student agency, a key goal of CICP (Sobré, 2017).

Furthermore, the creative process appears to allow for change and flexibility in understanding, whilst also simultaneously facilitating the stabilisation and examination of elusive ideas. Eisner (2002: 11) writes about the ways in which artistic expression can capture and communicate tacit knowledge and ideas differently, whereby the creative process "stabilizes what would otherwise be evanescent". For Eisner (2005: 20), all knowledge is dynamic and inherently

subjective and he argues therefore that “knowing” should be viewed as “a process rather than an object or product that is fixed and definitely knowable”. This conception of personal knowledge as ever-evolving can be found in much of the literature that values the process rather than the end product in creative learning. In this view, the value of engaging in creative, arts-inspired tasks is not that students can find a way of directly representing ideas or knowledge that have been established beforehand and worked towards in the process. Rather, it lies in the way that change and modification can happen within the process, enabling new meanings and significance to emerge and transforming prior understandings. For CICP, this may also be valuable because practising engaging in creative processes that are characterised by uncertainty and ambiguity may well enhance the ability to deal with the inevitable uncertainty of much IC.

The processes involved in undertaking arts-inspired, creative learning tasks would also seem to offer levels of both safety and challenge that are conducive to learning. Renowned psychologist Csikszentmihalyi (1997) has extensively studied the creative process and identified a 'flow' experience that is experienced when individuals are absorbed in creative work, characterised by a distorted sense of time and complete focus on the task. In order to achieve enjoyment and growth, he argues that skills and challenges should be well matched to avoid frustration and that there should be no worry of failure. Using basic collaging techniques with students can perhaps achieve a balance in this respect. On the one hand, collaging requires no particular talent. The fact that there are no wrong, right or expected answers also potentially frees students, while the process of visual creation can constitute a safe mode in which to explore different options (Simons and Hicks, 2006). On the other hand, as James and Brookfield (2014) note, engaging in creative learning tasks can be challenging to the extent that they often require that both teachers and students step outside their usual comfort zones. In addition, the very openness of artistic tasks could also be considered challenging for students, perhaps particularly if they lack confidence in their own knowledge or ideas. The educator perhaps has a role to play in creating the necessary balance here by creating a supportive environment in which all students feel they can participate. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) also identifies clear goals as necessary for

engagement in the creative process, and the completion of a creative piece of work may well meet this requirement.

Knowledge and understanding are not always encoded in words, and creative, arts-inspired tasks have also been positioned as constituting alternative modes of expression for learning. Scholars such as Barone and Eisner (1997) and Leitch (2006) maintain that learning and experience cannot always be expressed in appropriate language, while Lawrence (2012) has suggested that a reliance on written forms of expression also limits the possibilities of communication. In contrast, arts-inspired, creative expression allows students to reflect and understand in ways that avoid the limits of dictionary definitions of words and the requirements of linear thinking. For example, in educational research, Leitch (2006) harnessed creative practices in her exploration of teacher identities. In creating auto-biographical timelines, self-system pictures and identity masks, participants were able to go "beyond the limits of language" to access "tacit and non-conscious influences which were emotionally potent but previously hidden from themselves and others and that continued to affect their professional identities" (Leitch, 2006: 549). Her findings show that participants felt that arts-based reflection helped surface personal meanings through symbolic images that would not have been accessible in language alone. Although Leitch's research was not conceived as pedagogy, it has pedagogical potential: in some cases, the personal discoveries led the teachers to follow new directions in their lives, arguably demonstrating the ways in which arts-inspired reflection can be transformative and lead to personal action. Simmons and Daley (2013) also used collaging processes to stimulate thinking in an HE setting, with participants asked to reflect on their identity as academics and the research questions they were conceiving. They hoped that collaging magazine images would allow participants to engage with new ways of thinking and mental representations of their ideas. Their findings showed that participants valued moving away from writing, with the magazine images provided serving as prompts for thinking.

As part of a multi-modal approach to teaching and learning, creative tasks are often positioned as providing a break from the norm. There is also some

evidence that engaging in playful, creative processes can alleviate boredom by providing additional input that stimulates the nervous system (Storr, 1972). James and Brookfield (2014: xiii) argue that playful approaches can jolt students awake when they constitute something unexpected and unfamiliar, lifting them "into a different way of being". This may particularly be the case for students who usually work in text-driven environments where being asked to create a visual model, for example, might serve to energise them and create an atmosphere of "wide-awakeness" (Greene, 1995). In educational settings where standardisation, conformity and measurement are the norm, engagement in creative tasks may be particularly productive as they constitute a rupture with usual methods.

Not all students find it easy or even useful to transform their ideas into the formal, academic writing usually required for assessment procedures and artistic modes of working appear more inclusive ways of generating and reflecting on ideas (Simons and Hicks, 2006). Different modalities therefore also have the potential to engage a wider variety of students and acknowledge diversity in the classroom, not only in terms of cultural backgrounds, but also with regard to the varying levels of academic preparation and the ways in which students prefer to learn. The inclusive nature of artistic ways of working arguably highlights their potential for undergraduate seminar rooms that are diverse and aim to enable all students to capitalise on their unique experiences and resources in learning, in line with the principles of CP. Employing a variety of modes for learning has also been claimed to foster learning for those who *are* proficient in more traditional logocentric ways of working, offering all students new ways of understanding themselves and their fields of study (James and Brookfield, 2014). Furthermore, if students are exposed to different ways of thinking and doing things, they are perhaps more likely to be able to generate their own insights and ideas and cultivate an openness to unfamiliar approaches.

Finally, it can be argued that the focus on process in creativity and artistic endeavour is in line with the larger human experience and reflects the way we live our lives (Hallam and Ingold, 2007; Matarasso, 2012). For Ingold (2014) creativity is fundamentally about improvisation and the way we create ourselves

as worldly beings. This contrasts with an approach to creativity that focusses on innovation and the creation of novel end products. An approach to creativity that acknowledges the potential of the creative process would seem to sit well with a critical, relational approach to pedagogy and IC which also have processes of 'becoming' at their core rather than the measurement or evaluation of 'end-products'.

2.4.4 Accessing the Imagination in Arts-Inspired Tasks

A widely-cited reason for employing arts-inspired, creative tasks in a more progressivist and self-actualising pedagogy is their ability to access the imagination as part of the creative process, fostering the development of new ideas, perspectives and possibilities (Allen, 1995; Simons and Hicks, 2006; Simmons and Daley, 2013; James and Brookfield, 2014). Academic and art therapist Allen (1995) proposes that the imagination is the most important faculty we possess as humans, and scholars interested in creative learning in HE echo these sentiments with James and Brookfield (2014: 3) claiming that imagination is "the key to human progress" and Jackson (2006: 1) concurring that the "ability to imagine and then invent new worlds for ourselves is one of our greatest human assets and the origin of all human achievement".

Imagination as a generative capacity can be characterised as the ability to see things beyond our immediate realities. This can involve seeing a situation from another person's perspective, considering 'ideal world' scenarios, imagining ourselves in different time periods and contexts, even as objects; the possibilities are endless. Greene (1995: 16) encourages educators to find ways to engage the imagination "to cultivate multiple ways of seeing and multiple dialogues in a world where nothing stays the same". Echoing Freire's (1970/2005) notion of *conscientization*, she argues in favour of cultivating "wide-awakeness" through reflection and action, positioning engagement with art as breaking with habitual ways of seeing things and fostering openness to different perspectives. Harnessing the imagination to engage with different perspectives can therefore potentially develop the ability to understand those who are not like us, a key goal of IC pedagogy. Moreover, engaging the imagination in a consideration of

themes such as identity, exclusion, culture, or communicative competence can also be argued to enable students to move beyond entrenched or commonplace ideas and (re)create their own conceptions. For example, in Axtmann's (2002) discussion of “transcultural performance” in the classroom, students were asked to create a collage of their cultural identity and, in sharing their work with others, were able to move away from restrictive identifiers such as nationality and race, finding their perceptions of themselves and of others changed in the process. Although the imagination allows us to create new ideas and concepts, these are not viewed as emerging from nowhere, but are drawn from our past experiences and personal biographies (Allen, 1995). Thus, imaginative explorations of such issues can also constitute a valuable form of self-reflection, both for CICP and learning more generally.

The imagination can therefore also be considered to have the potential to destabilise the status quo, allowing us to envision and move towards better worlds for ourselves and others. Greene (1995: 5) writes of “the social imagination”, conceived as the capacity “to invent visions of what should be and what might be in our deficit society, on the streets where we live, in our schools”. The capacity of artistic processes to enable this has clear value for CICP, potentially encouraging students to imagine different futures and take steps to counter inequitable situations in which they and others find themselves. Creating collages of 'intercultural competence', for example, could lead students to go beyond abstract conceptualisations and reconsider their own experiences, potentially also projecting themselves into the future in a consideration of the kind of attributes or capacities they might aim to develop. Equally, it could involve an examination of the attitudes to diversity exhibited on wider, societal level and what might be done to foster equality.

Despite the fact that the ability to imagine can be considered common to everyone, a great deal of learning is not designed to enable students to harness their imagination in ways that might lead to progress at individual or indeed wider, societal levels. In HE, academic reading and writing are often emphasised to the exclusion of other ways of learning and understanding, with artistic tendencies often side-lined (Robinson, 2011; Lawrence, 2012; James and

Brookfield, 2014). If the imagination is indeed key to human progress, it can be argued that opportunities should be created in education for students to imagine different perspectives and alternative realities.

2.4.5 The Potential of Collaborative Creativity

Although conceptions of creativity are very often associated with individuals working alone, creative practices can also have valuable social aspects. For James and Brookfield, creative communities have a significant role to play:

> Creative and reflective thinking rarely happens alone. We need peers to bounce ideas off, to ask us productively troubling questions, to introduce us to new possibilities, and to alert us to omissions in our thinking. (James and Brookfield, 2014: 205-6)

As James and Brookfield (2014) found, students can find collaborative reflection on arts-inspired experiences particularly revealing, and in the present investigation elements of collaboration and sharing were built into the tasks. This was in keeping with a course which has communication at its heart and with previous course feedback which showed that the students valued working together in groups and exchanging ideas. Keith Sawyer has written extensively on the creative power of collaboration. In Sawyer's (2007) analysis, collaboration works best when a group needs to improvise together and it is not clear from the start what the tasks will be, or how work should be subdivided between group members. He also maintains that groups often do better than individuals at tasks where the task reflects the complexity of the real world, is unfamiliar to all group members, and requires innovative combinations of existing ideas and elements of visualisation (Sawyer, 2007). The collaborative task the students were given in this study, outlined in detail in Chapter 4, would seem to fulfil these criteria.

Sawyer (2007) also found that diversity in groups is key to collaborative creativity because interaction does not appear to achieve challenging levels in

teams where group members are familiar with the ways the others think. Diversity therefore enables multiple perspectives to be harnessed to push a team towards more complex ideas and outcomes. Blended egos and equal participation were found to be significant features of such successful creative collaboration (Sawyer, 2007). Postholm (2008) also found that the diversity in groups contributed to learning in her own practitioner research in a university classroom, with students commenting that the difference in perspectives enabled them to be more critical in their outlook and attitude to the subject matter explored. In a community-based arts education project, Harris (2013) explored a collaborative approach to interdisciplinary and intercultural pedagogy, with artists, researchers, teacher-educators, pre-service teachers and young people from refugee backgrounds and emerging communities working together. Theirs was a relationship-focussed creative venture, centred on collaborative and process-based learning rather than on outcomes or assessment, and demonstrated the power of creative collaboration to facilitate mutual knowledge transfer and contribute to transformative learning. Although the groups that carried out the collaborative tasks in the present study were composed exclusively of students, they can nevertheless be considered diverse and group members were unfamiliar with the others' ways of thinking and working. From the perspective of critical cosmopolitanism, arts-inspired tasks can therefore be said to respect the embodied practices in which cosmopolitanism is achieved and its ideals of promoting openness and valuing difference in creative collaboration: in the classroom, cultural differences and diversity do not need to be 'overcome' in the creative process but can be harnessed to create new understandings and ways of working.

Whether students are asked to collaborate on creative tasks or work individually, creating artistic work can be considered inherently social as we are social beings who draw on our socially constructed identities and experience in creative processes. Although creativity is often linked to the production of the new and original, Sawyer (2007) reminds us that creative processes and products build on convention, previous experience and existing concepts. Arguably, both ways of working creatively can unearth and develop our connections to wider society, allowing us to reposition ourselves and our ideas. Sharing individual work can

also potentially help students uncover and reflect on the subjective emotions and feelings that are aroused in the creative process. Such interaction around arts-inspired tasks constitutes another way in which diverse perspectives can be shared, critiqued and understood.

As discussed earlier, embodied ways of working that encourage students to uncover tacit knowledge and draw on their own experience to generate their own ideas are inherently individual and encourage students to infuse their work with personal elements. Collaborating on and sharing artistic work can therefore enable them to connect with one another in meaningful ways. Self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2017) suggests that learning environments and activities that fulfil the human need for relatedness also have a positive impact on intrinsic motivation. When this need for relatedness is fulfilled, it leads to positive feelings of self-worth and positive emotional attachments to peers which in turn sustain motivation and engagement (Martin and Dowson, 2009). It is therefore possible that the relational elements of artistic tasks will also be viewed by students as engaging, which is an important potential in a classroom that aims to foster authentic intercultural connections between students as part of an experiential CICP.

2.4.6 Conceiving Arts-Inspired Critical Reflection for CICP

In section 2.3.5 critical (self-)reflection was positioned as a pedagogical goal in CICP. This section aims to delineate critical reflection more clearly, linking notions of critical reflection in CICP with other conceptions of reflection and showing how artistic tasks may have the potential to foster this capacity. Various influential models of critical reflection exist, notably Schön's (1987) dual conception of reflection as involving *reflection-in-action* and *reflection-on-action* and Kolb's (1984) *Experiential Learning Cycle*. However, James and Brookfield (2014) point out that models of reflection can rarely account for the messy, non-linear and multi-layered processes that lead students to generate new insights and understanding, and the stance taken here reflects these scholars' view that reflection can involve a combination of any number of activities and responses.

In the most basic understanding, reflection involves turning experience into learning. Rather than being a purely cognitive process, reflection connects us to our senses and emotions and can therefore draw on intuition and artistry to help us make meaning in the creation of new knowledge (Fook and Gardner, 2007). It can also be considered context-dependent and may involve being open and adapting to new situations, taking into account new and different perspectives (ibid.). Reflection can be considered critical when it involves a consideration of the ways in which behaviour and thought patterns are influenced by the cultural and social contexts in which we move and is used as the basis for personal change (ibid.).

Critical reflection, and critical self-reflection are important dimensions of both "intercultural praxis" (Sorrells and Nakagawa, 2008; Sorrells, 2013) and critical cosmopolitanism (Sobré-Denton, 2012). For "intercultural praxis", Sorrells (2013) views critical self-reflection as the ability to observe ourselves and analyse our interactions and relationships with others. "Intercultural praxis" also views knowledge as contextually bound, requiring that we reflect critically upon our perspectives and frames of reference, along with our positioning in relation to others (Sorrells, 2013). To foster criticality in students, Phipps and Guilherme (2004) and Blasco (2012) also encourage educators to develop contextualised teaching strategies that go beyond self-reflection to help students reflect upon the power relations and value systems in which they move and the ways they construct otherness. As Mezirow points out,

> precipitating and fostering critically self-reflective learning means a deliberate effort to foster resistance to technicist assumptions, to thoughtlessness, to conformity, [...], to fear of change, to ethnocentric and class bias, and to egocentric values. (Mezirow, 1991: 360)

This perspective has much in common with Thayer-Bacon's (2000) conception of "constructive thinking". Drawing in particular on feminist theories, she presents

an approach to critical reflection that is relational rather than the result of individual introspection, and in which an understanding of our own experience develops the more we communicate and relate to others. Like Fook and Gardner's (2007) conception of critical reflection, constructive thinking is not only based on rational and logical thought processes but can harness imagination and emotion to examine assumptions and propositions in ways that acknowledge that true detachment and neutrality are unattainable. She argues that we should encourage students to be self-reflective and view intuitions, feelings, experience and ideas as tools for the construction of knowledge and the development of their own voice (Thayer-Bacon, 1995). From a critical perspective, the end goal of changed awareness is that it leads to changes in behaviour that have an impact on an individuals' social worlds (Fook and Gardner, 2017). If we are not actively engaged in critical reflection and attempts to change our patterns of thinking, the ways in which we experience and learn can solidify the status quo in ourselves and the worlds beyond us.

As argued in sections 2.4.3 and 2.4.4, creative arts-inspired tasks have been theorised as allowing students to harness their experience and use their imaginations and can therefore be argued to foster reflection of the kind described above. For example, in professional development workshops run by Stephen Brookfield, participants were asked to draw or collage group discussions, first individually and then combined as a group collage which was then presented to the whole workshop. (James and Brookfield, 2014). For Brookfield, this was an extremely productive practice, and facilitated engaged reflection on the original discussions. There has also been considerable interest in Lego Serious Play (LSP) as a pedagogical and research activity rather than just for business training where it has been established for some time (McCusker, 2014). McCusker (2014) employed the principles of LSP in education, asking preservice teachers to build, share, and reflect on models that expressed their teacher identities. He argues strongly that LSP practices should be harnessed for academic and pedagogical practice and notes that it is “the sharing and particularly the process reflection of LSP which allows deep insight” (McCusker, 2014: 29). The cycle of creating, sharing and reflecting that McCusker's students engage in is similar to my own approach when asking students to create, share

and reflect on their individual collages.

Artistic tasks have also been claimed to allow students to acknowledge their emotions, which Thayer-Bacon (1995) and Fook and Gardner (2007) consider integral to the reflective process. Although emotions, especially negative ones, are often discouraged in HE classrooms, they can be considered not only part of who we are, but are part of who we have been socialised to be, and they connect us to the world around us (Lanas, 2017). So, although emotions are felt individually, they are also part of the social experience and can be considered culturally conditioned ways of dealing with feelings (Denzin, 1984; Addison, 2011). Working creatively and using the imagination perhaps helps students to move beyond merely cognitive processes because creative methods constitute inherently emotional and embodied activities that allow us to draw on feelings, instinct and intuition (James and Brookfield, 2014). Simons and Hicks (2006) argue that art can reconnect people with their own experiences and emotions by offering opportunities for personal expression, while Addison (2011) found that participating in the creative process invites re-engagement with troublesome concepts and ideas that may otherwise simply be side-lined. Using artistic tasks to foster reflection therefore represents a move towards a view of learning that can honour these feelings rather than subordinate them to logical thinking. It also constitutes a more holistic view of pedagogy which positions the body and mind as a single entity rather than divorced from one another in learning processes (James and Brookfield, 2014). Incorporating arts-inspired, creative tasks into undergraduate learning environments would therefore appear to hold significant potential for enabling the imagination, emotions, intuition to be accessed in the creation of meaning and knowledge, which in turn is valuable for reflection as part of CICP. Perhaps particularly in subjects such as IC, where, in a critical perspective, there is an imperative to examine ourselves in relation to the world around us, reflection needs to include emotions that are evoked in the learning process and their possible sources. Collaging, for example, conceptions of intercultural competence, can potentially open up the possibilities for students to create personally meaningful, critically reflective knowledge by means of an “affective/cognitive synthesis” (Addison, 2011: 363).

Such reflection may be challenging and entail entering a “zone of discomfort” where teachers and students alike are obliged to rethink the ways in which they engage with the world, acknowledging their own biases and perhaps their own privileged positions (Lanas, 2017: 559). As Hoff (2014) points out in her critical discussion of Byram’s model of intercultural communicative competence, intercultural interaction can in fact perpetuate cultural stereotypes and prejudices rather than undermine them if there is no process of critical reflection, while points of contention and disagreement with others can prove fruitful ground for a deeper understanding if we are motivated to reflect on our own and others' assumptions. If we consider people's emotional responses and personal experiences valuable, we can harness these in reflection that raises consciousness of the wider social and political forces around us. Giroux tells us:

> Any viable approach to critical pedagogy suggests taking seriously those maps of meaning, affective investments, and sedimented desires that enable students to connect their own lives and everyday experiences to what they learn. Pedagogy in this sense […] presupposes that students are moved by their passions and motivated, in part, by the affective investments they bring to the learning process. (Giroux, 2011: 82)

2.4.7 Some Critique and Drawbacks of Creative, Arts-Inspired Tasks for Learning

Although creative, arts-inspired tasks have been shown to hold significant potential for learning, it is worth bearing in mind that including these tasks as part of an undergraduate course may entail drawbacks and risks. Firstly, although engaging in arts-inspired tasks can be energising and create an atmosphere of “wide-awakeness” in students (Greene, 1995), they can also be tiring and overwhelming as students may engage in self-reflection that leads to unsettling revelations or undermines their confidence. Furthermore, the benefits for all students cannot be guaranteed because creative, arts-inspired processes are inherently open-ended and experimental. In Germany, many students have had their artwork graded from primary school age, and this can potentially instil

a rigid self-concept of one's creative ability. As a result, there is a risk that students who believe that they are not creative or artistic will complete but not engage fully with the tasks, and therefore not benefit from the insights and understandings that can emerge.

Carlile and Jordan (2012) have also pointed out that an over-emphasis on creativity in education places another burden on students who are already under pressure to achieve other educational objectives, including high grades. This may particularly be the case if the goals of creative learning, as outlined in section 2.4.2, are incommensurate with other intended learning outcomes such as the ability to perform well in standardised exams or the development of specific pre-defined skill-sets. Although arts-inspired tasks have the potential to expand students' opportunities for learning and can be more accessible to students who may not excel in more linear, structured ways of working, scholars such as Carlile and Jordan (2012) and James and Brookfield (2014) have drawn educators' attention to the fact that some students will understandably prefer to work in familiar ways. It seems likely that when students are not familiar with the teacher, or do not understand the expectations or reasoning for undertaking unusual, creative tasks, resistance may be encountered.

Moreover, asking students to collaborate creatively in groups may present challenges. For example, as with any group task, some students may not fully take part, or they may compete against one another, or certain students may be excluded if their views do not harmonise with those of the majority. Carlile and Jordan (2012: 127) also warn of “paralysis” within creative group work, whereby the generation of ideas overwhelms group members and leads them to make safe and more ordinary choices. Nevertheless, if measures are taken to enhance group cohesion, and tasks are designed to encourage participation and reduce the need for competition, it seems likely that the benefits of creative collaboration advanced by Sawyer (2007) can be realised in most cases.

Perhaps the most discouraging critique of using arts-inspired tasks in HE may be the view that there are better ways to spend valuable and limited class time. Making collages and posters is time-consuming, and time spent working on such

tasks is time that is not spent on other scholarly activities such as discussing theory, examining case studies, or building academic skills. Since creative tasks are also often designed, as outlined above, to draw on emotions and experience rather than purely logical and rational thinking, there is also a risk that they will be viewed as unacademic (James and Brookfield, 2014). Such a view may be held by colleagues but it can also extend to students as they too are aware of what traditionally counts as learning in HE.

2.5 Summary of Chapter 2 and Research Questions

This chapter has positioned this thesis in terms of three distinct but compatible scholarly areas, aligning the research with the educational values of CP, situating it within scholarship in IC, and outlining what I view as the potential of arts-inspired, creative tasks to make a valuable contribution to CICP.

In the discussion of CP, I drew attention to its goal of empowering students to actively participate in an inclusive and democratic society and its commitment to identifying oppressive and marginalising forces at work in educational settings and beyond. CP takes the students themselves as the starting point for learning, encourages fluidity in education in order that it can respond to the resources that students bring into the classroom, and helps students critically examine their own experiences and identify their own positionality in relation to sources of power. Critical educators share a view of democracy that is inclusive and harnesses diversity for the greater good, encouraging students to engage with and learn from differences. Although CP has historically drawn criticism for its emphasis on cognitive reasoning and failure to address questions of race, gender and sexuality, recent scholarship has expanded the field to include new approaches to uncovering and counteracting injustice.

IC is a wide and multi-disciplinary field that has its origins in a variety of academic fields. In recent years there has been more interest in critical scholarship that rejects essentialist approaches in which culture is regarded as consisting of fixed traits that are evidenced by members of a particular

community. In a critical perspective, culture and communication are viewed as "mutually constitutive, contested, situated in and requiring responses to systemic power imbalances" (Sobré, 2017: 40). The critical turn in IC scholarship has also necessitated its translation into pedagogy, and, drawing to a large extent on the principles of CP, CICP has the goal of problematising connections between individuals, communities and global politics, encouraging educators and students alike to identify and understand the roots of inequality and work towards a more just society. While traditional approaches to IC pedagogy often make the development of intercultural competence their goal, CICP most often rejects the imposition of top-down conceptualisations of competence that gloss over questions of social injustice. Instead CICP is concerned with the on-going development of individuals living in complex intercultural settings and empowering students to take socially responsible action. Critical cosmopolitanism and "intercultural praxis" (Sorrells, 2013) are two alternative ways of imagining the pedagogical ambitions of CICP which foreground transformative intercultural encounters in which students learn to develop an appreciation for difference, an inquiry stance towards cultural others, the capacity to identify their own positionality and engage in self-reflection, and intercultural respect and kindness. This is the pedagogy that I aimed for when teaching the IC course within which this research was carried out, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Finally, this chapter has positioned creative, arts-inspired tasks as having the potential to contribute to and expand CICP. Creativity in HE has been regarded as beneficial for contrasting reasons and so I situated this research within the debate over the aims of creative learning, arguing for a view of creativity in education that foregrounds its potential for transformative learning and identity development rather than a marketised version in which creativity is linked to economic value of innovative individuals. In particular, I discussed scholarship that has demonstrated that embodied, creative processes which do not require linear thinking or the use of language can be considered inclusive and enable the generation of meaningful insights, potentially helping students unearth and better understand their own experiences. Arts-based learning and creative activities have also, in other contexts, been shown to engage the imagination:

collaborating on or sharing artistic work has been claimed to have the potential to help students appreciate multiple perspectives and enable the imagination of better, more equitable worlds towards which they feel empowered to work. Creative collaboration may also be particularly valuable for CICP because it has been shown to flourish as a result of diversity, drawing students' attention to the benefits of working in intercultural groups in which everyone has something unique to contribute. Furthermore, arts-inspired tasks may foster critical and constructive reflection that draws not only on rational thought processes but also on imagination and emotion to examine patterns of thinking and the ways in which we experience the world. Finally, I acknowledged that creative, arts-inspired tasks may not be welcomed by all and can, for example, be perceived as another burden on students who are under pressure, or as unacademic by colleagues.

Given the apparent potential of artistic tasks for learning as part of CICP, the research questions that guided this study, finalised after several iterations, became:

Overarching question:

- (How) is carrying out creative, arts-inspired tasks such as collaging and making posters valuable for learning in my critically-oriented 'Intercultural Communication' course? (RQ1)

Subquestions:

- To what extent and in which ways did participants value the creative, arts-inspired tasks? (RQ2)
- How did participants approach the tasks and what role did the creative process play? (RQ3)
- What were the differences between the collaborative and individual tasks? (RQ4)

A further research question permeated this study as I sought to understand my own role as a practitioner-researcher and adopt a critically reflective stance

towards my pedagogy. This question was: How do my values match my pedagogy? In the reflective interludes that appear between the chapters of this thesis and the postlude that concludes it, I seek to illuminate the extent to which my personal values and pedagogy were, and can be, aligned in practice.

In the next chapter I discuss the context in which the research was carried out, highlighting in particular the design of the IC course in which the artistic tasks were carried out.

I N T E R L U D E

Learning Objectives

Sarah: *Since I'm planning on becoming a teacher, I try to filter out of my studies what I can use for teaching later. It's sometimes pretty hard in English classes. Sometimes, it's theoretical stuff and you learn so much that... I'm not trying to say that it's not important; it's all important and it will all contribute to what you have to do later, and you definitely will need it and you need your own knowledge, but in the end... Sometimes I even just look at the whole class: I'm looking at the teacher, I'm trying to look at how I now feel in this situation. I'm considering myself a child in school and then I think about what's important. So I'm always trying to filter something out of each class. Sometimes, especially in lectures, I just might not listen to the actual theoretical input given to me but I rather look at how someone's moving about and using the board, something like that.*

Anne: *That's what I'm experiencing as well. Most of the courses I have to do in the uni, they are not really relevant for what I want to do later on. Especially in my other subject, most of the stuff isn't relevant and I'm not interested in it at all; I just want to teach it and that's what I'm also paying attention to. I know I have to be at a higher level to teach the lower levels, but I'm also more interested in didactics, how we teach. I think that's more interesting for me than the stuff I'm supposed to be learning, actually.*

Sarah: *For me, this was a reason why I chose your class. I think this will be important to us because... well, just think about the refugee situation which will reach us anyway if we really become teachers. We will definitely have to deal with it. And even if there won't be refugees, or even the kids of refugees by then... even if they are not in our classes, you could just spend a few weeks on having your own students be more sensitive to other cultures.*

Chapter 3 | The Context and the Case

3.1 Introduction to Chapter 3

This chapter presents the context in which this research was conducted. The following section briefly introduces the HE establishment and the department in which the study took place and highlights two current issues that are viewed as particularly relevant for situating the research, namely the impact of the Bologna reforms to HE and the removal of the attendance requirement for most courses. Section 3.3 explains the development of the IC course I taught over several semesters, while Section 3.4 provides specific details about the course in winter semester 2015/16, when this study was conducted. Section 3.5 extends this explanation of the case context to show how I translated principles of CICP, outlined in the previous chapter, into my own pedagogy and provides a more in-depth account of the course. Section 3.6 provides a summary of the chapter.

3.2 The University and the Department of English I

This case study is situated in a large, state-funded university in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), an industrial and populous state in the west of Germany. With more than 48,000 students at the time of writing (June 2019), it is one of Germany's largest universities. Students do not currently pay tuition fees as such, but there is a semester fee (*Semesterbeitrag*) of around 250 euros per semester which covers student union membership, access to campus sport facilities, and allows unlimited use of the regional public transport across North Rhine-Westphalia. The university has six faculties and the Department of English I is the second largest department in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. In winter semester 2015/16, when data for this study were collected, there were 1,536 undergraduate students in the department, with just over half of these students (810) studying English to become secondary school teachers (*Bachelor-Lehramt*).

There have been two university-wide changes which have had a noticeable impact on teaching and learning in the department over the last few years, and

which also proved relevant for making sense of the data analysis in this study. The first change stems from the Bologna reforms to HE which aimed to increase the comparability and quality of qualifications across the European Higher Education Area, thereby also encouraging student mobility. In Germany, some of the effects of the resulting modularisation of the curriculum and the development of the bachelor's and master's programmes have been the subject of much criticism. For example, students are now encouraged to complete the bachelor's degree within six semesters and many perceive that the content of degrees that previously took considerably longer has now simply been compressed into three years (Smith, 2012). As a result, students often feel overloaded with work and examinations each semester (Künzel, 2013). Roth and Petrow (2012) also consider that the increasing number of students suffering from stress and depression has resulted from changes to the degree system. In addition, critics such as Lenzen (2012) and Nida-Rümelin (2009) lament what they identify as a move away from the Humboldtian ideal of holistic HE that aims to develop autonomous world citizens in favour of a narrow view of education as vocational skills training for the labour market. Felix Grigat, representative of the *Deutscher Hochschulverband (*German Association of University Professors and Lecturers) has pointed out that the resulting version of student 'competence' that is now employed in German universities has little to do with the personal development and everything to do with the market (Grove, 2012). In the decade that I have been in my position and the reforms have been implemented, I have also noticed that many of my own students seem increasingly stressed by their workload and frustrated by the prescriptive nature of their studies.

The second significant change concerns the removal of the attendance requirement for courses. From 01.10.2014 a change in regional law prevented universities in NRW from requiring students to regularly attend classes, with some exceptions made for language practice classes or courses involving, for example, excursions. When this research was carried out, learning in most cases was therefore assessed solely in end-of-module tests or term papers, with attendance in seminars optional. The *Ministerium für Innovation, Wissenschaft und Forschung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen* (Ministry for Innovation, Science

and Research in NRW) concluded that requiring students to regularly attend courses violated their basic rights to occupational freedom (Article 12, Paragraph 1 of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany) and personal freedoms (Article 2, Paragraph 1 of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany). One reason cited for removal of the attendance requirement was that not having to attend class enables students to better combine their studies with family or work commitments, thereby addressing the disadvantage that students from low income families experienced. It was also felt that the removal of the attendance requirement would encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and lead to improvements in teaching quality. This decision proved highly controversial though, resulting in tales of university teachers ignoring the change in the law (Dorn, 2015; Gerstlauer, 2015; Rißе, 2015) and students resorting to stealing attendance lists in protest (Scholz, 2015; Sohn, 2016). Many of the studies conducted into the importance of attendance in university classes principally deal with the impact of non-attendance on exam performance (e.g. Allen and Webber, 2010; Gadinger, 2014; Ryan et al., 2010; Schulmeister, 2015; Wiarda, 2015) whilst much of the debate surrounding the removal of mandatory attendance at universities in NRW surrounds the significance of the skills and student characteristics that are developed through participation in seminars and not tested in standardised exams (e.g. Gullert, 2014; Meier, 2015). For the context of this research, the removal of an attendance requirement for the IC course meant that a student's attendance from week to week could not be assumed, and community building and continuity in content were more difficult to achieve than in previous semesters.

3.3 The Development of the Intercultural Communication (IC) Course

Along with the language practice courses I teach, I taught a course in IC in the Department of English for several semesters. In response to demand from students for a more business-oriented language course, the IC course was originally conceived with a strong focus on workplace communication, and this also matched my previous experience as a freelance Business English trainer. As a result, the course was originally rather functionalist and essentialist in approach, employing texts that were strongly influenced by Hofstede's (1991; 2001)

'cultural dimensions' approach to studying cultural differences across nations, and drawing, for example, on articles from the language magazine *Business Spotlight* on the subject of IC. Hence, there was also a strong focus on language use and communication styles in IC.

However, as outlined in Chapter 2, traditional functionalist paradigms have been criticised for overlooking questions regarding the relationships between culture, power, historical context, global shifts, and a variety of politicised identities (e.g. Martin et al., 2012). My developing appreciation of a critical approach to IC, in line with conceptions of CP, led me to attempt to make the course more relevant to the students themselves and the world we are currently experiencing, rather than simply career-oriented. Studying IC therefore, as Jackson (2014) points out, also became a matter of personal growth and responsibility, with the ethics of IC foregrounded in many discussions. A more critical approach to the study of IC is also better aligned with other specialist areas within the department such as postcolonialism and gender studies. Because this was a course that I designed and taught independently, I was free to make the changes I felt appropriate.

As the course took a more critical turn, I was also learning about the potential of performative and creative approaches to learning, as discussed in the previous chapter. Although I have no background in art or drama pedagogies, many creative activities are highly accessible and do not require a particular artistic inclination or previous experience working with arts-based methods. In the semesters prior to winter semester 2015-2016, I took some steps towards incorporating arts-inspired elements into previous courses. For example, inspired by Frimberger's (2013b) use of modelling clay for engaging students and building community, I tested tasks that involved modelling and sharing elements of one's identity from plasticine. I also carried out a small pilot study in which students were asked to draw and share their responses to a text about exclusion in intercultural settings. Although the task was well-received and the drawings stimulated discussion, this pilot study led me to the conclusion that creative, arts-inspired tasks which do not require drawing skills would be more accessible and therefore more inclusive for all students. Making models on the theme of

'culture' was a class task in the semester before I carried out my research, but, unlike in this case study, the models were made subsequent to reading a text on the subject of culture. Although the students' models and drawings demonstrated their learning and fostered reflection, these experiences led me to suspect that asking students to engage in the creative tasks *before* reading about the relevant theory would produce more interesting and personally relevant results, and thus this case study explores this alternative approach. Asking students to create collages of themes and ideas in class was not something I had tried prior to this study, but examples presented by Axtmann (2002) and Chilton and Scotti (2014) in different contexts suggested the potential of these methods for helping my students develop their ideas.

3.4 The Course of Winter Semester 2015/16: *Intercultural Communication: Theories, Experience and Dialogue*

All the data for this case study were collected in and around my IC course in winter semester 2015/2016. The course ran for 15 weeks from October 2015 to February 2016 and we met for 90 minutes on Fridays from 2pm till 3.30pm. The course was, for most students, part of an extension module (*Ergänzungsmodul)*, meaning that it was entirely optional for all students. It was also positioned as introductory level, indicating that no previous knowledge was required and there were no prerequisites for taking the course. In practice, this meant that students could take the course regardless of how far they were through their studies: while one student was in her first semester, others had studied for considerably longer.

There were 34 students in the course at the beginning of the semester and 32 students successfully completed it, which in most cases involved the submission of a reflective course portfolio at the end of the semester. The two students who did not finish the course left towards the beginning of the semester, citing a heavy workload as their reason for dropping the course. The students were mostly aged between 20 and 25. Fifteen of the students were exchange students from French, Italian, Polish, Swiss, Chinese and Greek universities. Of the 17 students completing their degrees in Germany, eight indicated in group

introductions that they considered themselves not only German but variously Greek/Polish/ Turkish/Japanese/Afghan. Neither the course nor this study aims to reduce culture along national lines, but this information nevertheless serves to illustrate the heterogeneity of the course with regard to the students' own cultural backgrounds. This diversity was a great asset to the class, enabling 'authentic' intercultural communication to take place in class and discussions in which multiple perspectives were represented.

The course was titled *Intercultural Communication: Theories, Experience and Dialogue*, which indicates the three pillars I encouraged students to connect. In brief, the course introduced students to a variety of scholarship in intercultural communication, included a component that involved students spending time together in a part of the city they had not previously visited, and encouraged dialogue and reflection on their own experiences, global and local current affairs, and the connections they made (or rejected) to the literature provided on intercultural communication. In most cases, credit for participation in the course was obtained on submission of a reflective course portfolio which functioned in much the same way as a learning journal. These received comments and feedback from me, often in the form of further questions, and they were not graded. Ten students chose to give a presentation in class, for which they obtained an extra credit point and a grade, as per the guidelines for the module in which the course was located. The remaining 22 students achieved an ungraded 'Pass'.

The course was divided loosely into three sections. As it was positioned at introductory level with no previous knowledge necessary, I chose to spend the first part of the course covering the basic (but nevertheless complex and contested) concepts of identity, othering, and culture. The second part was a small project that involved the students getting together in groups outside class and reflecting on their experiences together, while the third and final section aimed to expand the theory, looking at concepts such as exclusion and conceptions of intercultural competence. Using information that students shared in the first week of the course, the students were split into seven smaller heterogeneous groups that were fixed for the semester, and within which they

completed a variety of group tasks.

A large part of the reading for the course was taken from Jackson (2014) *Introducing Language and Intercultural Communication*. I found this book particularly accessible for non-native speakers of English and appreciated its focus on global contributions to the study of IC and Jackson's acknowledgement of the need for more indigenous research and practice that recognises unequal power relations in intercultural contact. I also gave the students sections from Holliday, Hyde and Kullman's (2010) resource book for students and Piller's (2011) critical introduction to IC. As comprehensive, accessible and useful as Jackson's (2014) textbook is, it does focus primarily on skills-based interpersonal interactions with ethnocentrism and 'othering', for example, framed primarily, although not entirely, as natural psychological tendencies which "create barriers to successful, equitable intercultural interactions" (Jackson, 2014: 158). In contrast, one third of Holliday, Hyde and Kullman's (2010) advanced resource book for students deals with the theme of representation and the social construction of cultural representation. The focus on connections between micro and macro levels in this textbook seemed productive for CICP. Chapter 10 of Piller's (2011) critical introduction to IC deals with conceptions of language proficiency and state language regimes and proved particularly generative of discussion in previous semesters since almost all course participants are studying English as a foreign language but often have very different experiences and expectations of this field. Students were also exposed to mainstream ways of viewing IC, including Hofstede's 'cultural dimensions' in excerpts from Jandt's (2010) textbook. Table 3.1 gives an outline of the course plan while Appendix B lists the reading assignments set for the class in full. Further material in the form of short videos, a poem and newspaper articles supplemented the literature.

Part 1: Exploring Key Concepts	23.10.15	Course Introduction
	30.10.15	Intercultural Communication
	06.11.15	Identity and Othering
	13.11.15	The Concept of Culture
	20.11.15	Nation and Culture/ 'Cultural Dimensions'
Part 2: Project Work	27.11.15	Sharing Perspectives (preparation)
	04.12.15	Sharing Perspectives (out in Cologne)
	11.12.15	Sharing Perspectives (reflecting and reporting)
Part 3: Expanding The Theory	18.12.15	Ways of Viewing Communication
	08.01.16	Nonverbal Communication
	15.01.16	Intercultural Communication in a Multilingual World
	22.01.16	Representation/ Exclusion
	29.01.16	Intercultural Competence (1)
	05.02.16	Intercultural Competence (2)
	12.02.16	Closing Session: Course Review and Feedback

Table 3.1: Outline of the IC course (winter semester 2015-16)

Despite the change in law concerning attendance in seminars outlined above, students were told that regular attendance in class was important as the main objective of the class was not to achieve a knowledge of theories or texts which can be measured in a standardised test, but rather personalised understandings and experience. However, in the event that a student was unable to come to class regularly enough to submit a reflective course portfolio, an exam option existed (although none took it). Overall, the course was fairly large and well-attended and splitting students into seven smaller groups allowed them to work on tasks collaboratively and enhanced communication. As there was no prescribed curriculum, there was room for flexibility regarding the course content and, in practice, the students who gave presentations chose and provided a significant proportion of the material. Course feedback showed that most students appreciated the topics and the reading that were covered in class and the opportunities provided for work and discussion in small groups.

To sum up, the course was optional and positioned at introductory level. Approximately half the course members were studying at the university for one or two semesters as exchange students and the 32 students were split into several smaller intercultural groups within which they worked most lessons. Most students obtained credit on submission of an ungraded course portfolio and

ten students gave a presentation which was graded. Texts from a variety of textbooks were made available for students, and further material was provided in class in the form of short videos, news articles and other text types, but students also had significant input into the content that was covered in class.

3.5 Translating Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP) for the Course

Díaz and Dasli (2017) point out that translating critical pedagogical frameworks into classroom practice for intercultural communication remains a challenging area, from the development of learning objectives and assessment tasks to the training of future teachers. Some of the tension lies in the fact that criticality can be considered an orientation to life that requires continuous reflection and problematising teaching practices rather than privileging its own discourses. Thus, it is difficult to translate this stance into learning objectives and measurable assessment tasks that are imposed upon students, or into a particular teaching methodology that is presented to future teachers. This is the reason that I chose to ask students to document their own learning and reflections over the course of the semester rather than sit a pass/fail exam, which would have been the alternative for the course according to the module guidelines. Hansen (2011) furthermore argues that learning is a non-linear process and that students may regress just as they may progress. Indeed, informal feedback has shown that much of the learning that resulted from participating in the IC course is often not felt until months or even years after the course has ended. If an educator is aiming for the development of a critical engagement with the self, the subject matter and the world beyond, or cosmopolitan sensibility, this entails the recognition that this is never something that can be fully achieved but is rather “ever incomplete, ever emergent” (Hansen, 2011: 101). This perspective stands in contrast to the view of intercultural communication that lies behind the certification of competence outlined in the previous chapter, and highlights some of the issues with imposing short-term or competence-driven learning objectives on students in this course.

As Lanas (2017) points out, a presentation of goals runs the risk of turning CICP

away from its greatest potential strength, which lies in the ability to imagine new forms of social justice, and I agree with her assessment that "[i]n intercultural education, the shared process itself is the only possible 'solution'" (ibid.: 561). Holliday, Hyde and Kullman's (2010) resource book for students, organised around the key concepts of identity, othering and representation, states that the book's purpose is to engage the reader in a dialogue, pointing out that there is no single route to achieving success in IC. In presenting different perspectives, they offer students material to consider critically, nevertheless making clear their view that essentialism, as a driving force behind racism, sexism and culturism, must be recognised and fought. In line with this approach, my stated course aims are framed around the provision of opportunities for students to encounter and consider intercultural communication concepts and scholarship, engage in dialogue with others, and reflect on their own personal development. Thus, pedagogy was designed to

- introduce students to key themes in intercultural communication
- foster an awareness of the socially constructed nature of knowledge and the ethical and social justice dimensions of intercultural communication
- encourage self-awareness and personal development by providing opportunities for students to reflect on and evolve their own identities, attitudes and beliefs
- engage students in critical and constructive thinking with regard to the interplay between intercultural communication theory, their own experiences and wider society
- provide space for intercultural interaction and the development of interpersonal connections
- foster the recognition and appreciation of diversity and different perspectives
- enhance student voice, agency and resilience in the classroom and beyond
- build community and engage all students

The course attempted to counter essentialism, which in this context can be defined as "the belief that the attributes and behaviour of socially-defined

groups can be explained by reference to […] characteristics believed to be inherent to the group" (Jackson, 2014: 365). I therefore did not ask students to analyse or define particular cultures. However, course feedback from previous semesters had nevertheless revealed that some students wished they could learn more about national cultures. My compromise lay in giving students who elected to give graded presentations significant freedom in choosing their presentation topic. The presentations covered all manner of themes but students sometimes did choose to present cross-cultural communication differences based on their experience living in different countries, or differences in non-verbal communication styles, often by nation. Halualani (2011: 44) points out that as intercultural scholars have often succeeded in painting culture as "product and commodity" it is unsurprising that university students sometimes also wish to see culture as "fixed tablets of knowledge to be applied and consumed". It is potentially a reductive approach, but students were encouraged to make critical connections to the concepts covered in class and to recognise the limitations of essentialist approaches. The discussions that followed such presentations were often revealing in this respect.

In any case, essentialist approaches to IC are embedded in everyday understandings of identity and difference and ignoring them rather than opening them up for examination could arguably contribute to their perpetuation. The course therefore also included an introduction to Hofstede's (1991; 2001) much critiqued 'cultural dimensions' and students were asked to consider the advantages and pitfalls of categorising cultural values and beliefs along national lines. Although it is a time-consuming activity, in most semesters I asked students themselves to complete individualism/collectivism and power distance self-assessments (reproduced in Neuliep, 2012: 57 & 80) and compare their scores both amongst one another and with the rankings by country (reproduced in Jandt, 2010: 166 & 178). This exercise usually revealed not only how little the individual students' results actually corresponded to rankings for the countries they come from, but also how much variety there was among, for example, three students from France or three students from China. Students are also usually quick to critique the self-assessment as a research method, pointing out, for example, that their individual responses to the questions could vary greatly

depending on their interpretation of what is being asked, or according to the different contexts in which they find themselves. Halualani (2011: 46), reflecting on her own experiences of introducing students to Hofstede's work and their lack of engagement with it, argues that students assume that "this important intercultural scholar has already discovered the absolute truth of culture and how it operates in a universal way across situations, contexts and groups". I have also experienced students who, at least initially, "feel confident in Hofstede's claims, empowered by his conclusions, and prepared to take such knowledge and apply it to the cultural counterparts they meet in their own contexts" (ibid.) but I believe it can prove more empowering (while also potentially disorienting) for students to discover that they are able to critically evaluate dominant theoretical paradigms themselves. All in all, although I attempted to counter essentialism in the course, discussion usually moved between essentialising and non-essentialising views of culture and intercultural communication.

It is also a course that provided the time and space for students to tell one another their own stories and to reflect on them both together in class and individually in their reflective course portfolio. After reading a text or watching a short film, students were not asked to summarise the content but asked to react, reflecting on, for example, what they found most interesting or surprising, or perhaps even what they already knew, or what they would have preferred to have found out about. This was then often shared in small groups and there was no imperative to come to a consensus or a group response. The aim here was to address the individual concerns of students and enable students to admit other group members into their own worlds in the ensuing conversation in order to foster interpersonal connection. When students explained why they found a particular point in a text most interesting or memorable, they often found themselves telling personal stories. I was fortunate that narrow modes of assessment were not imposed by the university on this particular course and that the students were therefore allowed the time and opportunity for exploration and "artful wondering and wandering" (Sameshima, 2009: 13).

Each semester we also examined relevant current affairs. Over the course of winter semester 2015-16, the Syrian refugee crisis was much in the news, with

German Chancellor Angela Merkel finding herself under attack in some quarters for her 'open door' policy towards refugees. At the beginning of the semester, the city's mayoral candidate was hospitalised after a knife attack by an individual with a history of far-right activism who appeared to be motivated by her welcoming position towards refugees (The Guardian, 2015). Over the Christmas break, the city was in the news for mass attacks on women around the main train station at New Year's Eve, with almost all attackers identified by the police as immigrants (Die Welt, 2016). More fire was added to the debate as this news story seemed to have been deliberately suppressed in initial days. These events became the focus of some discussions particularly towards the end of the semester as we considered cultural representations of foreign 'others' and the role of the media in creating these representations, along with the problematic status of refugees as “cultural travellers” (Holliday et al., 2010: 39).

Occasionally, I asked students choose and bring in materials for discussion to supplement texts from coursebooks that I made available. For example, when we considered media representations of refugees and asylum seekers, students were asked to find newspaper/internet articles that they presented to one another and analysed together. This led to a discussion of articles in a variety of different languages and from different perspectives, and students had the opportunity to make connections between their own opinions, media presentations and intercultural theory, sharing these with other students and critically examining their own and others' perspectives. In joint endeavours such as this, students were able to develop IC skills, but the focus lay on raising awareness and engaging students in issues related to social justice. The aim, as Halualani (2011: 47) argues, was to encourage students to see that IC requires “their active role as critical readers/participants who will analyze, reflect, deconstruct, and re-imagine their intercultural world”.

However, it perhaps needs to be acknowledged that critical approaches are better received by some students than others. As McLaren (1989) maintains, an educator can only offer students opportunities to engage. CP can be considered utopian in its emancipatory principles, whereas the stated goals for my course were relatively modest. This reflects my acknowledgement that the IC course

played a relatively small part in students' lives and, although feedback from previous semesters shows that it did make a significant difference for many, not all students were significantly impacted. Phipps (2010: 69) advocates “the walking on through way, the continual discernment way” of dealing with disappointment when pedagogy fails to deliver the personal development and transformation in students that an educator hopes for, arguing that this is part of the deal when working in education. A critical approach to teaching IC also involves a critical examination of one's own work as an educator and the acknowledgement that it must be in continual development as an emergent process. The integration of creative, arts-inspired tasks into the class and this research project can be considered part of the ongoing process of my own development.

3.6 Summary of Chapter 3

This chapter has detailed the context in which the research was carried out. It introduced the university and the department within which the IC course took place, noting the effects of the Bologna reforms and the removal of the attendance requirement for students. The development of the course I was responsible for conceiving and teaching was then outlined, including an explanation of how the course gradually took a more critical turn and creative tasks came to be employed. Specific details about the course of winter semester 2015/16 were provided and the chapter also described the way in which CICP was translated for the course in this particular semester.

The following chapter sets out the research methodology, in which I discuss the epistemological underpinnings of the inquiry, research ethics, data collection, approach taken to data analysis, and development of the research text.

I N T E R L U D E

Reflective Portfolio Entries

Everyone has something to say, but if those who might change the world for the better choose to remain silent and deaf we will be left with those who do not even try to change the world for the better. We will be left with those who have constantly been reassured of their power and superiority. It does not take much to figure out the number one priority of these people, and it will most probably not be to end poverty and to provide starving people with the food that is being destroyed deliberately every day by global producers for profit reasons. No, number one priority will be to add more money, more power and more influence to their person.

Now the question to ask is the following: are we, the silent-remainers, the who-am-I-to-change-something-thinkers and the pathetic it-has-always-been-like-that surrenderers not part of this world? We need to have the courage to ask the right questions and to actually do something. I cannot save the world on my own, but I can be part of a massive movement that has the power to hit the world like an avalanche of justice, happiness, equality and joy. I could be the snowflake to change one person, for example by helping one Syrian refugee, by teaching a child how magnificent our world is and how important it is to protect each and every aspect that adds to the variety of beauties. And this is exactly what intercultural communication is to me: our only chance. It always needs someone to start talking to get an answer, right?!

Elif (portfolio entry)

Reading Warsan Shire's, who is a Kenyan-born Somali poet, poem "Home" chastened me. "Why will they not stay in their home countries?", they say. "They must be insane blowing up their compatriots!", they say. "I would never leave home no matter what.", they say. "I would simply emigrate and never turn back.", they say. "So many people drowned in the Mediterranean already why do they still try to cross it?", they wonder. "Why should they find shelter in public institutions of ours if there are many a refugee camp?", they ask. "They are trouble.", they say. "They take away our jobs!", they complain. "Look at them!", they say. These are only a few exclamations I have heard with reference to the refugee "crisis".

"No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark [...] You only leave home when home won't let you stay [...] No one leaves home unless home chases you fire under feet [...] no one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land [...] the words are more tender than fourteen men between your legs [...]".

It did not take much more, if it took anything at all, for me to understand why people leave their home countries, that I would leave my home country in a case like this and that not turning back must be so hard when turning back is the only thing you want to do. It enrages me that prosperous, allegedly humanitarian countries, complain that the "refugee crisis" is going to "ruin us" while there are countries suffering from poverty themselves but still accepting refugees in order to provide them with a safer place to live in. I spoke to Jessica, a fellow student, a couple of days ago and we both agreed, that the development within Germany is incredibly unsettling and that the both of us fear, that history might be repeating itself. I have always been of the opinion that we, as Germans, should no longer see ourselves connected to Hitler, the prosecution of the Jews and World War II in so far that my generation, even my parents' generation, had nothing to do with what happened. However, seeing people literally ignoring our history deeply saddens me.

Helena (portfolio entry)

Chapter 4 | Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction to Chapter 4

This chapter outlines the research methodology and methods adopted as I sought to understand students' experiences and the pedagogical impact of carrying out two arts-inspired, creative tasks in my IC class. Although this overarching aim anchored the study from start to finish, the research questions (presented in Chapter 2) went through several iterations throughout the inquiry process. The decision to be flexible with regard to the scope and depth of the study stemmed primarily from my desire to allow participants to co-determine the areas upon which the spotlight should be shone. Indeed, this is the reason that the study was initially conceived as participatory action research (PAR), as stated in my application for ethical approval. Although for practical reasons I subsequently decided to frame this thesis as a case study rather than PAR, my ethical commitment to positioning students as co-researchers remained and also informed decisions I made about the character of the research interviews and the focal points for data analysis.

The following section of this chapter presents the methodological and epistemological underpinnings of this inquiry, grounding the study in the literature on practitioner research in education, case study inquiry, and creative research methods. Section 4.3 follows with an explanation of my access to the 24 participating students and a consideration of the ethics and dilemmas encountered in the approach I chose. Section 4.4 details the research design and data collection. I describe the two creative tasks my students were given as part of their classwork and the research interviews that followed each of these tasks. A total of 23 semi-structured individual and small group interviews, conducted in two phases with those students who volunteered to become participants, constitute the bulk of the data. I also drew on their artistic coursework, reflective course portfolios, my own researcher diary, research conversations with four 'critical friends', and supplementary 'backstage' data. This section also offers a timeline of data collection. In section 4.5 I explain the choices I made with regard to data analysis and the ways in which the data and findings are presented in this thesis, harnessing the concepts of 'bricolage', abduction and

'crystallization' in research methodology. Section 4.6 presents some reflections on the methodology and section 4.7 summarises the chapter.

4.2 Methodological Underpinnings

This section provides the rationale behind the research design, demonstrating in turn how the literature on practitioner research in education (section 4.2.1), case study inquiry (section 4.2.2) and creative research methods (section 4.2.3) informed my approach. Although I explored a number of methodologies such as narrative inquiry and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), I concluded that these approaches were not best suited to reflecting the views of 24 participants. Ultimately, I allowed myself to be guided by my overarching research aim and the values of the pedagogy I wished to advance, creating an approach to inquiry that can be considered an emergent 'bricolage' of methods best suited to the unique circumstances of the inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013). 'Bricolage', discussed in detail in section 4.5.1, sits within the interpretative tradition of qualitative research that rejects positivist understandings and universal standards for carrying out research in the social sciences. Rather, the researcher attempts to view a phenomenon through the experiences and perceptions of the research participants, acknowledging that all stages of the research are shaped by the researcher's own biography and positioning and that findings are inherently subjective and contingent (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013).

4.2.1 Practitioner Research in Education

I came to postgraduate study with fairly traditional ideas about what constituted research in the social sciences and originally envisaged myself conducting an ethnographic study. Only on encountering Frimberger's (2013a) innovative doctoral thesis in which she explores her own Brechtian research pedagogy for intercultural education did I start to recognise the possibilities and potentials of practitioner research in this field and its legitimacy as 'real' research in the academy. Practitioner research in education is characterised by great variance and labels are contested, but most forms nevertheless share several

commonalities and, in most cases, practitioners are educators who are looking to better understand and evolve their own practice. In education, practitioner research is often carried out by teachers within school settings, such as Boon's (2016) research into ways to increase the uptake of peer feedback in a primary school and Camahalan and Ruley's (2014) classroom intervention with blended learning. At doctoral level, practitioner research can be regarded as creating new knowledge at the nexus of the researcher's professional practice and their interaction with the theory and methodologies established in the academy as part of an integrated reflexive project (Drake and Heath, 2011). The goals of practitioner research in education are often emancipatory. Particularly when practitioner research is designed as participatory and aims to give agency to all those who take part, the inquiry can lead to transformation beyond the researcher's professional practice and result in cultural change (Leitch and Day, 2000).

From a methodological viewpoint, practitioner research represents a theory-research-practice approach to inquiry that makes use of and develops research processes to foster critical reflection and action in professional settings. The researcher is embedded in the inquiry setting and data emerges from a relational, contextualised, collaborative, and practice-centred form of inquiry (Ravitch, 2014). Thus, practitioner research can be said to embody the epistemological shift away from traditional conventions in social science research within which the truth is regarded as 'out there' waiting to be captured by an objective value-free observer and the distance and objectivity of the researcher vis-a-vis the object of the research should be maintained (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006; Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009). Rather than being research which aims for neutrality or requires the researcher to 'bracket off' their own values and positioning regarding findings and outcomes, practitioner research regards the emic perspective and wide range of contextual knowledge that the researcher brings to the inquiry as an asset to be critically 'mined' (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009).

For Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009: 120) practitioner research should constitute “inquiry as stance” and involve the cultivation of a “critical habit of mind” in

those seeking to understand and improve the world of educational practice. "Inquiry as stance" is positioned as counter-hegemonic in that it challenges ideas that are implicit or explicit in the dominant educational regime and has emerged

> out of the dialectic and synergy of inquiry, knowledge, and practice and from the intentional conceptual blurring of theory and practice, knowing and doing, conceptualising and studying, analyzing and acting, researchers and practitioners, and public and local knowledge. (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009: 3)

In rejecting traditional dichotomies between practice and theory/research, researcher and participant, and subject and object, practitioner research can become an "epistemological hybrid" that can generate new forms of knowledge in educational research (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009: 94). In the process of inquiry, the practitioner-researcher aims to throw into doubt perceived wisdom, raise questions about the status quo, and enhance learning, choices and chances for the students (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009).

In addition to challenging the status quo, practitioner-driven research gives those who carry out the research agency to bring about locally appropriate change (Somekh and Zeichner, 2009). Although top-down, performance management forms of practitioner research have emerged for teacher training and professional development (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009; Whitehead and McNiff, 2006), most versions share a sense of the practitioner as knower and agent for educational and social change with all participants, including the practitioner themselves, regarded simultaneously as "knowers, learners and researchers" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009: 42). In a university context, transgressing traditional social science boundaries and undermining clearly defined roles can be particularly generative, creating possibilities for new forms of knowledge and innovative research programmes (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009).

A further expression of practitioner research that informed my approach is

Whitehead and McNiff's (2006) Living Educational Theory, which is oriented around a single key question: 'How do I improve what I am doing?' Theirs is a value-driven understanding of research and pedagogy which espouses care and compassion and a concern with freedom and the right of all to decide for themselves how they wish to lead their lives (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). 'Living theory' turns the spotlight on the educator-researcher and serves as a reminder that we should rigorously interrogate our own assumptions and be ever on the lookout for the contradictions between espoused values and actual practice as part of a continuing process of reflection.

This concern with reflexivity within the research practice is consistent with the rationale for employing arts-inspired tasks for learning as part of CICP, as explored in Chapter 2. In section 2.4.6, I argued that acknowledging and examining emotions is integral to the reflective process and Day and Leitch (2001) have drawn attention to the importance of recognising this for teacher development. The holistic approaches to reflection they advocate recognise emotions as key starting points for professional and personal development and change. Postholm and Skrøvset (2013) support this view, arguing that practitioner-researchers should be present with their whole selves; for a holistic understanding we must engage cognitively and emotionally. Thus, just as I asked participants to reflect on their own experiences not only in terms of thinking and acting but also of feeling, so I too engaged with the emotional dimensions of the project as part of the reflective process (also evidenced in the interlude Uncomfortable 'Research Questions': My Collage).

Practitioner research appears well placed to foster exploratory partnerships with student-participants and collaborative research processes have the potential to undermine the traditional model of teacher-expert and student-novice. Indeed, in their seminal work on action research as a form of practitioner inquiry, Carr and Kemmis (1986: 164) claim that it can constitute “an embodiment of democratic principles in research” when it allows participants to influence their own social conditions and collaboratively to develop their own critiques. Considering the kind of research relationships that can best harness this democratic potential, Ravitch (2014: 6), in line with others such as Whitehead

and McNiff (2006), finds practitioner-driven research at its most promising when "practitioners take seriously the responsibility to collaborate with, care for, support, and empower, ourselves, our colleagues and our constituencies". This is the kind of research I aimed to carry out and I return to these issues in section 4.3 where I consider the ethical dimensions of this study.

4.2.2 Practitioner Research as Case Study

A great deal of practitioner research, this thesis included, is framed as case study, which Simons defines as "an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a 'real life' context" (Simons, 2009: 21). Ragin (1992) also maintains that boundaries need to be set around the places and time under investigation in case study, and Thomas and Myers (2015) call for a clearly delineated subject and object of the study. In this particular project, the spatio-temporal dimension is fairly easily defined: the case in question is my IC course of winter semester 2015/2016 at one of the largest universities in Germany. This class and the course members constitute the subject of the study while the object of the inquiry is the value of arts-inspired activities for these students within this context.

Whereas other research approaches consider generalisability and the testing of hypotheses across many cases essential to creating knowledge, in single case study research spatial, temporal, personal and organisational particularity is key to gaining understanding of a concrete case and developing nuanced exemplary knowledge (Thomas and Myers, 2015; Flyvbjerg, 2006). In-depth case studies have been claimed to hold the possibility of understanding something in a holistic manner and creating a "rich picture" (Thomas and Myers, 2015: 15). Working with case studies can also enable researchers to seek the particular rather than the ordinary and therefore allows them to consider experience in ways that do not represent what is average or typical, but rather nuanced and specific (Stake, 2005). Beyond this, cases have been claimed to be essential in human learning where "context-dependent knowledge and experience are at the very heart of expert activity" (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 222). Case study research can

therefore make a significant contribution to knowledge by offering nuanced, insightful and exemplary understandings that can connect and contribute to the ongoing generation of knowledge.

4.2.3 Multimodal, Creative Research Methodologies: Creative Work as Research Artefacts

In this study, the processes of teaching, learning and researching are to a certain extent merged. Although I position the artistic work in this study as contributing more to pedagogy than research, in this section I argue that the inclusion of the students' collages and posters as research artefacts adds an important dimension to a study that aimed to be multi-layered and holistic, moving it along what Ellingson (2009: 6) labels " the continuum of qualitative methods" in the direction of those that can be considered arts-informed or arts-based.

Opinions are divided about what constitutes arts-based research, with conflict centred around the significance of aesthetic standards, the circumstances of the creation of the 'artwork', and the role of the 'art' in the research process. Nevertheless, the rationale for including artistic methods in academic research is generally commensurate with the principles of practitioner research. Like practitioner research, arts-based forms of inquiry reject the idea of one single objective reality and challenge "empirical forms that reduce human experience to knowledge claims of certainty" (Leitch, 2006: 553). Instead, arts-based methods recognise knowledge as contingent and subjective and honour multiple ways of knowing, including embodied, sensory knowing (Osei-Kofi, 2013). Arts-based research can also be used to co-create knowledge in the research process, fostering "the expression of multiple truths and the interaction of these truths to make new, individual and collective meanings" (Leitch, 2006: 553). Furthermore, arts-based research methods have been positioned as having an inherent counter-hegemonic potential to the extent that they can raise consciousness in participants and thereby enable critical dialogue (Osei-Kofi, 2013). Thus, like participatory practitioner research, such methods have the capacity to work an inclusive, liberatory agenda.

Prosser and Loxley (2008) highlight the fact that some artistic research methods

foreground the practice of making over a reading of the visual artefact and, in this particular study, this was the case. Indeed, the research itself concerned the value of creating and sharing artistic work as part of pedagogy rather than envisaging it as part of the methodology itself. This is the principal reason I chose to refrain from characterising this research as 'arts-based'. Instead, I opted to label the tasks given to students 'arts-inspired' or 'artistic' and I position their inclusion as a source of data as contributing to a creative, multimodal research methodology rather than arts-based research per se.

Nevertheless, this research could be considered arts-based to the extent that participants creative 'artworks' were also used to facilitate further data. Incorporating the students' creative work into subsequent research interviews allowed more fluid conversation and access to a variety of questions, ideas and meanings that may otherwise have remained hidden, or gone uncreated (Weber, 2008; McIntyre, 2002). When viewing the work together with participants, images could facilitate words: for research purposes just as in pedagogy, creative visual images can act as a supplement and "a means to bypass the restrictions of verbal discourse alone" (Leitch, 2006: 556). This was a particular advantage in this study as none of the participants was using their first language. Additionally, incorporating visual artefacts such as collages into interviews (see section 4.4.2) allowed for a multitude of entry points as images allow us to circumvent intellectual, linear thinking and present ideas all at once (Arnheim, 1970).

Furthermore, I would argue that the visual images themselves represent valuable forms of data, firstly in terms of their ability to evidence what the participants wished to express and secondly in their capacity to communicate directly with the viewer. On the one hand, the participants' descriptions of their images in interview allowed me to understand their perspectives and draw conclusions that answered my research questions and I agree with Mannay (2016) and Elliot et al. (2017) that whatever emerges in the way of understanding must be embedded in the contextualised narratives of creation. On the other hand, I believe that the inclusion of students' visual work in this thesis does in some way also offer an audience a chance to engage directly with the participants rather

than through my subjectivities. In *Making* Tim Ingold (2013: 111) writes of "telling by hand" and argues that "telling", as "a practice of correspondence" should be considered distinct from articulation in which something is made logically clear. There is also an argument that artistic representations can sometimes speak "even beyond their maker's means" (Diamond and Mullen, 1999: 41). Thus, I would also argue that it is possible for an audience to engage with the participants' work without necessarily knowing the intentions of the creator, just as we might with abstract art. This would thereby constitute a further way in which visual data has the power to facilitate multiple understandings and different readings and, potentially, resonate with an audience, as Leavy (2009) maintains. For the merged teaching, learning and research practices inherent to my practitioner research, I agree with Rolling (2010) that

> we negotiate bodies of knowledge in a complex world where human beings learn and acquire life practices enacted upon a spectrum between both scientific *and* artistic ways of comprehending the human experience and doing cultural work. (Rolling, 2010: 103)

The next section details the way in which participants in this study were accessed and the ethical considerations inherent to the research.

4.3 Accessing Participants and Ethical Considerations

This section consists of two parts. Firstly, section 4.3.1 details the way in which participants were recruited for the study. Secondly, section 4.3.2 addresses the ethical considerations inherent in a methodology which, as both teacher and researcher of my class, rendered me "doubly bound" to ethical behaviour towards students who agreed to become research participants (Mohr, 2001).

4.3.1 Accessing Participants

Accessing participants for this study was relatively straight-forward since I was recruiting students from my own class. Nevertheless, it was not without challenges and ethical implications. While all 32 students carried out the arts-inspired tasks in class (detailed in section 4.4.1), only the 24 students who agreed to discuss their experiences with me in interview became research participants in this study.

Following the first class task carried out in Week 4 of the semester (discussed in section 4.4), I emailed the whole class via our campus management system and invited those who had been present in class to become research participants. Very few students responded to this invitation so the following week I took a sign-up list to class and asked students face-to-face if they would be prepared to help me. Although this was a considerably more successful way of recruiting participants, as course teacher I was in a position of authority and very aware that some students may have found it difficult to refuse my request. Balancing my need for research participants with my desire to respect students' potential reluctance to take part was not easy, but ultimately I believed that taking part in the conversations would also be beneficial for students, helping them reflect on their own learning processes and preferences.

After the second class task, carried out towards the end of the semester, I conducted a second phase of interviews and again emailed all students to request their participation: this time the response was far better. Table 4.1 below outlines the 24 participants and the data collected from each. Data gathering tools are discussed in section 4.4.

	Name	National background	Semester of study (x: no info. available)	Degree programme	Participation in: Group poster task (Nov 13th 2015)	First interview phase (IP1) (Nov 2015)	Individual collage (Jan 29th 2016)	Second interview phase (IP2) (Feb-Jun 2016)	Reflective course portfolio (Feb-Mar 2016)
1	Martin	German	5	BA English (teacher training degree)	+	+	+	+	+
2	Sophia	Greek	x	exchange / study abroad programme	+	+		+	
3	Peter	German/Afghan	3	BA English Studies	+	+		+	+
4	Ronja	German	4	BA English (teacher training degree)	+	+	+	+	+
5	Elif	Turkish/German	7	BA English (teacher training degree)	+	+	+	+	+
6	Laura	German	1	BA English (teacher training degree)	+	+	+		+
7	Qinyang	Chinese	x	exchange / study abroad programme	+	+			
8	Louise	French	x	exchange / study abroad programme	+	+		+	+
9	Sarah	German	5	BA English (teacher training degree)	+	+	+	+	+
10	Anne	German/Polish	3	BA English (teacher training degree)	+	+	+	+	+
11	Marie	German	3	BA English (teacher training degree)	+	+	+	+	+
12	Mai	Swiss/Vietnamese	x	exchange / study abroad programme	+	+	+	+	+
13	Alex	Greek/German	3	BA English Studies	+	+		+	+
14	Klara	Polish	11	BA English Studies	+	+			
15	Laura	German	2	BA English (teacher training degree)	+		+	+	+
16	Jessica	German/Japanese	5	BA English (teacher training degree)			+	+	+
17	Esther	German	3	BA English (teacher training degree)			+	+	+
18	Caroline	German	5	BA English Studies			+	+	+

19	Christophe	French	x	exchange / study abroad programme	+		+	+	+
20	Helena	German	3	BA English Studies				+	+
21	Yunlong	Chinese	x	exchange / study abroad programme	+			+	
22	Katharina	German	x	BA Media Studies			+	+	+
23	Yuwei	Chinese	x	exchange / study abroad programme	+		+	+	
24	Xiu	Chinese	x	exchange / study abroad programme			+	+	

Table 4.1: Overview of participants indicating participation in formal data collection activities

Explanatory Notes to Table 4.1:

Information about a participant's programme of study is provided where available. In including national backgrounds, I do not wish to reinforce a reductionist approach to viewing the participants, or engage in "methodological nationalism" (Beck, 2006) but rather to demonstrate the heterogeneity of the participants. In reality, many of the students understood themselves as having hybridised identities that stretch far beyond notions of national citizenship.

The classroom itself, and therefore the environment in which the tasks were carried out, was more culturally rich than the information about the research participants indicates. The eight students who were part of the class but who chose *not* to take part in the research were Greek (1), French (2), Italian (2), Polish (1), Chinese (1) and German (1). Although nothing in the data itself suggested that it would be productive to analyse the results along specific national/cultural lines, it is nevertheless notable that nearly half the students (7 out of 15) studying at the university on exchange programmes chose not to participate, while only one 'home' student did not participate.

As explained later in section 4.4.2, in the first round of interviews only those students who had participated in the group poster task were invited, whereas in the second round all students were invited, regardless of whether or not they had been present in class for the individual collaging task. This choice was made to enable me to develop a better understanding of their perceptions of the research context. As a result, for example, Helena became a research participant although she was not present in class for either of the creative tasks that are the focus of this case study. While the hour that I spent talking to her served to inform my thinking about the course and wider context, her voice is therefore absent with regard to the creative tasks themselves.

4.3.2 Ethical Considerations

In addition to addressing the concerns of my employer authorising the research and securing permission to research (Appendix C), in this study I attempted to embody my own understanding of ethical behaviour as grounded in CICP. In the event, living up to my own expectations did not prove unproblematic, particularly as I was not able to make the study as collaborative as planned. It was also necessary to consider the students in the class who did not become research participants because they too participated in the arts-inspired activities in class and agreed to be photographed and filmed at the start of each class, even though their work would not be included in data analysis. Before the course started, I emailed all the course participants to highlight the implications of the research project and uploaded the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix D) and Consent Form (Appendix E) to our e-learning platform. At this point, students still had time to register themselves for an alternative class if they so wished.

With regard to the study itself, ethical approval from the College of Social Sciences' Research Ethics Committee was sought and granted in June 2015 (see Appendix F) with two amendments submitted to allow me firstly to offer students tokens of appreciation (cinema/book vouchers) and secondly to improve the clarity and precision of the information sheet and consent form. Amongst other measures taken to ensure the protection of my participants, anonymity in research publications was guaranteed and it was made clear that participants could withdraw at any point. Participants gave their informed consent, although, as Eisner (1991: 214) has pointed out, 'informed consent' can be a contentious issue as the researcher cannot know before the event what the possible effects will be, and these effects are perhaps particularly unpredictable in an exploratory study in which the researcher and participants already have a teacher-student relationship. The Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research provided by British Educational Research Association (BERA) highlight the need for researchers to consider the ethical tensions introduced in practitioner research and address these accordingly (BERA, 2018a: 13, point 19). These guidelines also cover the potentially problematic use of incentives to encourage

participation (ibid.: 19, point 33). Although I originally considered incentives an unnecessary ethical complication in the context of this study, the advantages of giving participants a cinema or book voucher for each research conversation quickly became apparent. Framed as tokens of appreciation, my use of 'incentives' was intended primarily as a sign of respect for my students, signalling that I considered their time and contributions valuable. Moreover, the gift vouchers served to highlight the distinction between participation in the research process and participation in the IC course: for both myself and my research participants concurrent engagement in the two unavoidably led to them becoming conflated in certain ways and so the use of gifts for participation became helpful in underscoring the voluntary and separate nature of participation in the research.

I found that I also needed assistance with filming and photographing the classroom activities for my own records and tentative explorations in other classes had shown that asking course members to do this themselves often detracted too much from the actual task. I therefore asked for assistance from two master's students, Nina and Jens (pseudonyms), who were both very advanced in their studies. Jens also worked part-time as an administrative assistant in our department and Nina had been in several of my classes over the years. I considered that asking them to assist me would likely be less intimidating to the class members than asking fellow teachers and I trusted both Nina and Jens to be sensitive in their filming. I knew both well and therefore decided to capitalise on their insight by asking them to become 'critical friends' and share with me their own impressions of the course pedagogy. The presence of these 'assistants' in class was not without ethical implications, particularly as it later emerged that Nina had shared a Swedish language course with one of the class members. Nevertheless, students in the class did not appear to be disturbed by their presence and neither Nina nor Jens were in any way party to the subsequent research conversations carried out with those students who became research participants.

The ethical considerations facing practitioner-researchers can be considered “ambiguous, context-sensitive, and therefore resistant to generic regulations” (Zeni, 2001: xi). Indeed, it is possible to argue that, in our relational world, this

holds true of all kinds of research activity in which people are involved, with the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the researched being a key ethical issue in all qualitative research (van den Berg, 2001). It is here that an interrelational ethics of responsibility and care comes in. In the field of intercultural education and research, and with reference to MacDonald and O'Regan (2013), Frimberger (2017: 30) outlines an "ethical praxis of responsibility" where ethical considerations are not abstract concepts but directly linked to the specifics of the participants' lives. A movement away from simply focussing on "what is right" and "what is wrong" can be said to occupy a third space encompassing an ethics premised on "difference, responsiveness and uncertainty" where knowledge is created "in being-with others" (Phillips and Zavros, 2013: 54). This is an ethical praxis which is embodied and embedded in practitioner research that centres collaborative practices and dialogical conversation between researcher and participant (ibid.: 53). Reciprocity is at the heart of such a conversation:

> In achieving an inside and interrelational perspective, a researcher must firstly be open to sharing with others what she sees and feels. Doing this is an acknowledgement of shared space in time and an inherent tension that exists when embracing the various perspectives about what is seen and felt. (Phillips and Zavros, 2013: 55)

An attempt to redress the imbalance in power relations is therefore implicated in such reciprocity in order to avoid the situation Behar observes:

> We ask for revelations from others but we reveal little or nothing about ourselves; we make others vulnerable but we ourselves remain invulnerable. (Behar, 1996: 273)

Treating the research partnerships as "consultancy and collaboration" can foster a sense of power and agency in participants (Etherington, 2004: 32), and practitioner research is particularly well positioned to redefine leaders as learners, thereby blurring hierarchical boundaries (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009).

Although I do believe we were able to transgress the usual hierarchical expectations in many cases within this study, it would be disingenuous to claim that they were collapsed. Indeed, the potential of practitioner research to represent a more democratic form of research did not stop my study becoming riddled with ethical tensions, many of them concerning the degree to which the study could be called participatory. For example, despite the intentions expressed in my application for ethical approval, I was unable to spend as much time with each participant as I originally had hoped, and I was not able to include them in decisions about the interpretation or representation of data. This is principally because I progressed more slowly than anticipated and only reached this stage of the research after many participants had left the university. I also wanted to avoid burdening participants with unreasonable demands on their time. Additionally, using English as a common language in interviews also has ethical implications for this study: as I was the only native speaker present, I reinforced my more powerful position, despite other attempts to redress the hierarchical imbalance, and participants would not be able to express themselves as they would in their first languages.

Zeni (2001) points out that even the decision to use the pronoun *I* has ethical implications as we give an account of the research and argues that we must follow principles of accountability and responsibility throughout the research process. Scholars such as Etherington (2004), Whitehead and McNiff (2006) and Phillips and Zavros (2013) also believe that, as practitioner-researchers, we need to scrutinize our own behaviours for ethical tensions or contradictions and be as aware as possible of what we are doing:

> It is hoped that by embracing the quandaries found in research endeavors, researchers also come to challenge and rethink notions of status and agency. Research must move from the sometimes rigid, narrow, and exclusionary definitions found in methodology books in order to enable practitioner-researchers and participants to negotiate a democratic and relational approach to sociological research. (Phillips and Zavros, 2013: 55)

Taken as a whole, this section has therefore aimed to address some of the quandaries encountered in this case study and demonstrate in particular the reflexive, collaborative and relational approach I aimed to adopt in the inquiry process.

4.4 Data Collection

This section outlines how data was collected and provides a rationale for my choices. In brief, participants were asked to carry out arts-inspired tasks at two different points in the semester, with interviews conducted in two phases: after the first task and again after the second task. Section 4.4.1 presents the two artistic classroom tasks that all students in my IC class were asked to carry out, explaining in detail how these were set up and examples of preliminary data gathered. Section 4.4.2 details the subsequent interviews, or 'research conversations' that I conducted with participants. Finally, section 4.4.3 details the nature and collection of supplementary forms of data that were used to inform analysis, such as recorded conversations with 'critical friends' and course feedback.

The interviews with the students who became participants form the bulk of the data, with the collage and poster work itself serving to facilitate these conversations and contributing to a multi-layered picture of the findings. This data is further supplemented by reflective student portfolios, my own researcher diary, recorded conversations with three 'critical friends', and photographs and short films of the students working. Figure 4.1 below presents the sequence of data collection activities as a timeline and Table 4.2 provides an overview of the data collected for this study.

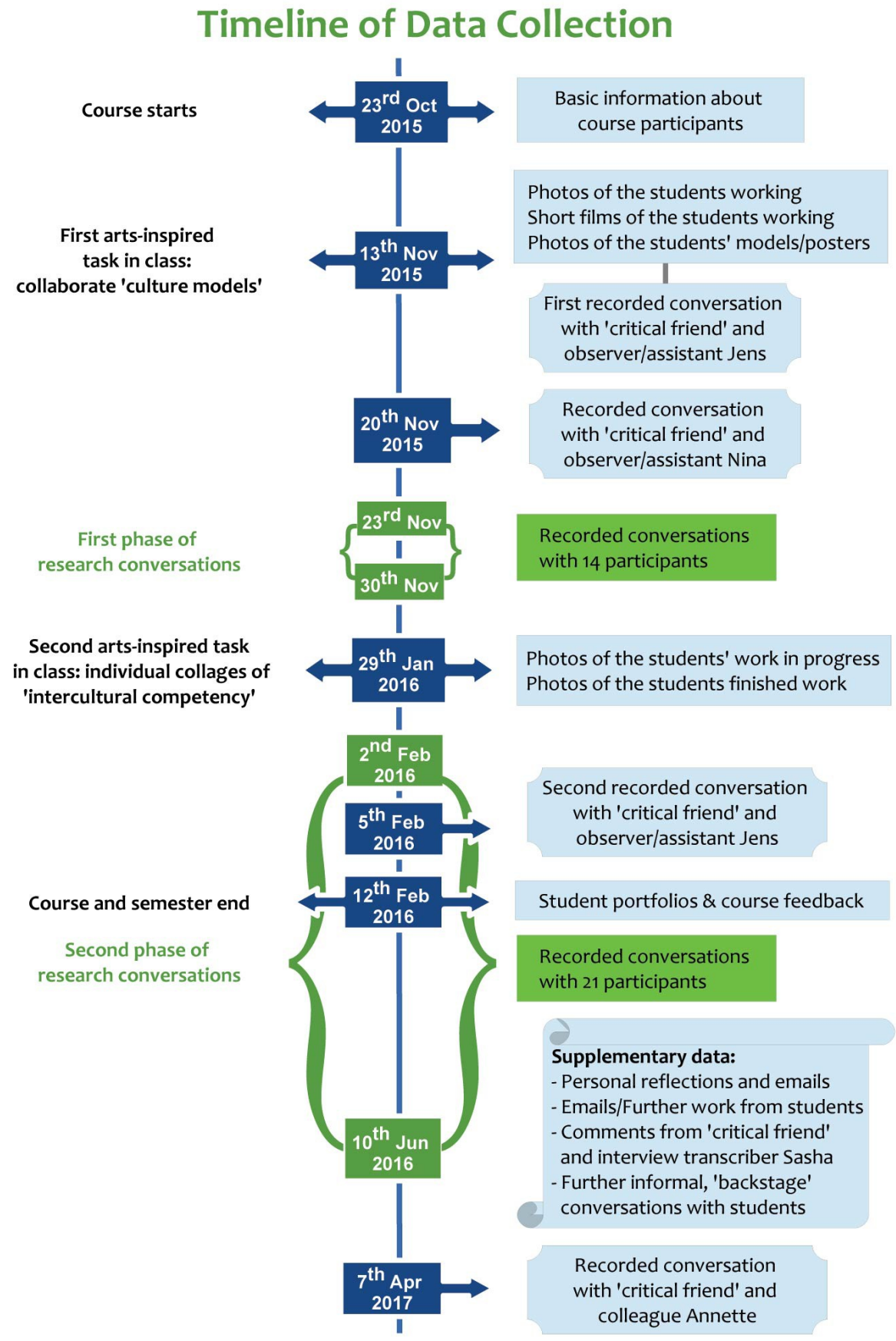

Figure 4.1: Timeline of data collection

Phase 1: Collaborative 'culture' posters	
Description	**Details**
Films of students working on the posters	8 short films (5-10 mins each)
Photos of the students working on the posters	ca. 30 photos
Photos of the completed posters	5 posters; 2/3 photos of each poster
Recorded reflective conversations with 'critical friends' Jens and Nina	ca. 20 mins each
Recorded semi-structured interviews with student-participants	7 conversations with a total of 14 students (see Figure 4.3 for further details)
Phase 2: Individual 'intercultural competence' collages	
Description	**Details**
Photos of the students working on the collages	ca. 50 photos
Photos of the completed collages	16 collages; 2/3 photos of each collage
Recorded conversation with 'critical friend' Jens	ca. 20 mins
Recorded semi-structured interviews with student-participants	16 conversations with 21 students (see Figure 4.4 for further details)
Further data	
Description	**Details**
Reflective course portfolios	18 portfolios
My researcher diary	Many notes and reflections concerning methodolgy, class observations etc.
Emails	5/6 relevant emails sent by students
Course feedback forms	27 anonymous feedback forms
Informal feedback from 'critical friend' and interview transriber Sasha	Written feedback attached to anonymised transcripts
Recorded conversation with 'critical friend' and colleague Annette	ca. 1 hour

Table 4.2: Overview of data collected

4.4.1 The Arts-inspired, Classroom Tasks

When conceiving the artistic tasks for my students I set a number of criteria. Specifically, the tasks needed to:

- fit thematically and pedagogically into the course schedule (Table 3.1)
- be doable within the 90 minutes class time
- be achievable for all students, regardless of artistic talent or prior knowledge of the topic
- involve creating something tangible by hand

Although the students carried out other, less time-intensive activities in class that could be called arts-inspired (e.g. making small plasticine models in the second week of the course), this study explores two arts-inspired tasks that each took 90 minutes to complete. The first was a collaborative poster/model on the theme of 'culture' which students undertook in the small groups in the fourth week of the course. The second task was carried out towards the end of the semester in Week 13 and consisted of an individual collage on the concept of 'intercultural competence'. In this case, students worked on the task alone, but were given 15 minutes to share their collage with another student at the end of the class. As outlined in section 4.2.3, the creative, arts-inspired tasks carried out in class and designed for learning also function as visual data created by those students who became research participants.

First arts-inspired task: The collaborative 'culture' poster (13.11.2015, Week 4/15)

The class undertook the first arts-inspired research activity in the fourth week of the semester. The previous three lessons had aimed to build community both as a whole class and then in smaller, intercultural groups. We had also started to explore some of the theory that underpins the field of intercultural communication, starting with the concept of intercultural communication itself (see Chapter 2 for a fuller discussion). Until the fourth week of the course though, we had not directly interrogated the term 'culture'. I was fairly confident that the students would already have their own ideas about what the

word implies and felt that the breadth of its application would lend itself well to reflection and discussion in intercultural groups. Students were not asked to read or prepare anything for this class as the focus lay on their own conceptions of culture and the ways in which they would combine and negotiate their ideas with group members.

Materials for the class included white flipchart paper, sheets of A3 and A4 coloured paper and card, packs of coloured felt-tip pens and pencils, scissors, glue sticks and string (see Illustration 4.1 below). I explained to the students that although we had been using the term culture in our discussions for the last few weeks, we had more or less been taking its meaning for granted; now they had the opportunity to examine their assumptions. I asked them to work together in the small groups that had been established in the second week of the semester to produce a poster or model that expressed the group's conception of culture. Although I had partly envisaged the task as a community building activity for the seven small intercultural groups that had been formed in Week 2, unfortunately more students were missing from class that particular week than at any other time during the semester and I had to merge some groups so that there were a total of five.

I also explained the presence of my two 'assistants' (detailed in section 4.3.2) who had kindly agreed to film and take photos (using iPads) of the students working. Nobody expressed any objections when told they could ask not to be included in photos and films if they preferred. The students worked solidly on their posters, with a couple of groups struggling to finish on time but managing nevertheless. After class, the students were emailed and invited to discuss their experiences of carrying out the task in research interviews.

Illustration 4.1: 'Culture' posters in progress 13.11.2015

Second arts-inspired task: The individual 'intercultural competence' collage (29.01.2016, Week 13/15)

Towards the end of the semester, students carried out the second arts-inspired task that constitutes the focus of this study: an individual collage on the theme of 'intercultural competence'. Despite the brevity of the semester, at this stage of the course students should have achieved a much greater awareness of intercultural communication as a field of study, a useful insight into some of the current theories and concerns in this field, and had time and space to reflect on their own perspectives and experiences in class and beyond. As before, the students were not given anything to prepare or read on the concept in advance of class as I wanted them to create and interrogate their own understandings.

I took the same pile of coloured paper, pens, scissors and glue to class, but this time the materials were supplemented by a large array of pictures cut from magazines. Some magazines had been donated by friends, some were free, and some I bought. Although the choice of pictures was largely unimportant since I was asking students to work metaphorically rather than literally, when collecting images for class I soon discovered that thought-provoking photographs and illustrations from magazines such as *Psychologie Heute* (Psychology Today) were

substantially more suitable than some others. Generally speaking, I tried to offer the students a great many images that were interesting and open to interpretation.

I explained to the students that they could work with metaphors and in fact use the images to represent whatever they wished. I advised them not to stick the pictures down too quickly and to spend some time thinking about what they wanted to convey. When Jessica asked if she could use her smartphone to research intercultural competence, I was offered the perfect opportunity to explain that students should focus on their own perspectives in this lesson rather than try to reproduce the theories of others: I would give them a text on scholarly conceptions of intercultural competence to read in advance of the following class, but for now I wanted the students to recognise their own experiences as significant and central to their understanding, in line with the central tenets of CICP outlined in Chapter 2.

The students worked quietly and continuously. The only significant noise was the scraping of chairs as they got up to look for materials and they generally only spoke to ask for something to be passed down a table. Our team assistant Jens circulated with an iPad and took photos of the students working and their developing collages. Everyone appeared to complete the task on time and the last 15 minutes of the class were devoted to students sharing their work with a partner, comparing and contrasting ideas and approach. For this I asked them to find someone they hadn't spoken to before, giving them an opportunity to meet another student outside their established groups. I ended the class by inviting everyone to participate in further research conversations, regardless of whether they had been present for the first task and promised a follow-up email with further details.

Illustration 4.2: Individual 'intercultural competence' collages in progress 29.01.2016

4.4.2 Follow-up Research Interviews: From Images to Words

There is, it has to be said, a contradiction between exploring the ability of the arts-inspired tasks to transgress the limitations of language and using in-depth interviews as the main data source in this study. Nevertheless, to answer my research questions it was necessary to hear the students describe how they approached the tasks, what they felt, how they experienced the collaborative and individual creative processes, and what their work represented. Finally, I also wanted to gain insight into the context within which we were working from the students' point of view and, bearing in mind that this was not the primary focus of the study, felt it was simplest to do this in conversation rather than adding another layer of arts-inspired methods.

I was aware that this approach brought with it ethical issues and limitations, not

least because I conducted the interviews in our common language (English) and I was the only native speaker present. This 'superior' linguistic status will not have gone any way to redressing the hierarchical imbalance that is perhaps inevitable when a teacher interviews her own students. No methodology is perfect and each comes with its own limitations, and this approach seemed the most suitable under the circumstances: whilst I do speak German and some French, I don't speak Greek, Mandarin, Italian or Turkish. Since our classroom language was English, it also felt natural to extend the use of this language into research conversations, but clearly this put some students at a disadvantage and I tried to be vigilant that some voices were not silenced or 'voiced over' by either myself or other students.

Interview Phase 1 (IP1)

The first round of interviews was conducted 10-17 days after the students worked collaboratively on their group culture model/poster and focussed on their experiences of this task. I invited the 18 students who had been present in class to participate in research interviews and 14 agreed to become research participants. Table 4.3 provides an overview of these interviews.

Name	Date and duration of interview
Martin	23.11.15 (50 mins)
Sophia & Peter	24.11.15 (45 mins in 2 parts)
Elif & Ronja	25.11.15 (approx 1 hour)
Laura, Qinyang & Louise	25.11.15 (approx 1 hour)
Sarah & Anne	26.11.15 (approx 1 hour)
Marie, Mai & Alex	26.11.15 (1 hour, 10 mins)
Klara	30.11.15 (37 mins)

Table 4.3: List of interviews (first phase)

As can be seen above, these interviews were sometimes conducted on a one-to-one basis, sometimes in pairs and on two occasions the conversations involved three participants. Although it could be argued that the lack of consistency here is a flaw in the data collection, I found this flexibility both necessary and

desirable as finding times to meet students proved challenging and I also wanted them to have some influence over whether they met with me individually or with classmates. In the latter case, I considered that some students might prioritise confidentiality and rather talk to me alone, whilst others might appreciate a group dialogue and/or prefer not to be the sole focus of the conversation.

The interviews were conducted in my office at our round meeting table over coffee/tea and biscuits. The Participant Information Sheet (Appendix D) and Consent Form (Appendix E) had been available on our e-learning platform from the beginning of the semester so some students had already read them, but I started the conversations by giving all participants their own copies and allowing them time to read through the documents and ask questions. In accordance with the holistic, exploratory nature of the study, the interviews can be considered semi-structured: I had a list of questions prepared in order that the conversations address my original research questions but allowed participant responses to lead us rather than working through them in a particular order. In order to meet ethical requirements of the type of practitioner research I wished to carry out, these semi-structured interviews were conceived to a large extent as reciprocal dialogues, or 'research conversations' in which data was co-constructed between researcher and participants (Phillips and Zavros, 2013). My main guiding questions were:

How did you feel when you were given the task?
How did you feel when you were working on it?
How did the group work together?
How do you feel about the result?
Would you do anything differently?
What do you think about the posters as a class task?

The interviews were recorded on my mobile phone which I placed on the meeting table, and the audio files were later transferred to my laptop. I ended each conversation by giving the participants a ‘thank you’ card and a voucher for the *Metropolis* cinema or *Mayersche (*a well-known chain of bookshops in Germany) as a token of appreciation.

Interview Phase 2 (IP2)

Once more, after the class in which the individual collages were made, I invited students to discuss the task in research interviews. The email invitation this time was also addressed to those students who had not actually been in class that particular week as I was now, at the end of the semester, also interested in gathering wider-ranging feedback about the course as a whole and other contextual factors in order to better understand the ways in which the arts-inspired tasks were received and experienced. Table 4.4 provides an overview of the second phase of interviews, which took place between 2nd Feb 2016 and 10th June 2016.

Name	Date and duration of interview
Lena	02.02.16 (approx 1 hour)
Peter	03.02.16 (approx 1 hour in 2 parts)
Elif & Ronja	03.02.16 (approx 1 hour)
Mai & Alex	03.02.16 (1 hour, 10 mins)
Jessica	05.02.16 (40 mins)
Esther & Marie	09.02.16 (1 hour, 35 mins)
Anne & Sarah	10.02.16 (1 hour, 20 mins)
Sophia	11.02.16 (30 mins)
Caroline	12.02.16 (1 hour, 5 mins)
Martin & Louise	16.02.16 (1 hour, 6 mins)
Christophe	23.02.16 (1 hour, 25 mins)
Helena	03.03.16 (1 hour, 7 mins)
Yunlong	09.03.16 (30 mins)
Katharina	25.05.16 (57 mins)
Yuwei	03.06.16 (1 hour, 28 mins)
Xiu	10.06.16 (1 hour, 9 mins)

Table 4.4: List of interviews (second phase)

Again, for practical reasons and to respect the participants' references, I met

some students individually and some together with a classmate. Many students were preparing for exams at the end of the semester and/or away during the break and so this interview phase extended over a period of five months. New participants were given the Participant Information Sheet, time to ask questions about the study, and they then signed the consent form. As with the first phase, the conversations were loosely structured to maintain flexibility and authenticity and aimed to address my research questions while at the same time giving space to issues the students highlighted as personally significant. My guiding questions were:

How did you feel when I first gave you the task?
How did you approach it?
How do you feel about the result?
How did the sharing process go?
How do you feel about the task?
Can you tell me about what your collage represents?
What is important to you in your studies?

I brought the participants' collages to the table and we looked together at what they had created and explored some of the underlying concepts and ideas. A variety of themes arose in the conversations, from exchange students' experiences of the city to the role of the reflective course portfolio in the course. Data that did not immediately seem directly relevant to this study nevertheless gave me further valuable insight into the motivations, personal backgrounds, and characteristics of the participants. For example, it emerged that Martin and Klara lived far away from campus and that their long commute to university had a significant impact on the way they engaged with their studies.

Some students attended both interview phases but many did not. 14 students were interviewed after the first arts-inspired task was carried out and 20 after the second. 3 students who were interviewed in the first phase did not return for the second phase, but nobody withdrew from the study. The lower number of participants for the first phase of interviews is explained by the fact that many students were missing from class when the culture poster was made and I only invited those students who had been present in class to take part in the research

at that point. In contrast, most students were present when the collaging task was set and for the second phase of interviews I invited the whole class rather than just the students who had been in class that particular week. Table 4.1 provided earlier in this chapter gives an overview of the participants and the data collection activities in which they participated.

Semi-structured interviews as collaborative inquiry

The approach I took to collecting data in interview was driven partly by my desire to enable reciprocity and a "social ethic of care" (Phillips and Zavros, 2013: 53). This had an impact on the character of the interviews that I carried out with research participants. In this thesis, I take a view of the interview as negotiated text and, in taking an empathetic approach to interviewing, the researcher can be considered "advocate and partner" (Fontana and Frey, 2005). Extending the ethics and values of teaching and researching into interviews therefore involved an attempt to remove barriers and engage in 'real' conversations, human to human (Postholm and Skrøvset, 2013). To foster a collegial atmosphere, I provided biscuits and emailed the participants in advance of our meetings to find out what they would like to drink from the cafe in the building. We shared personal stories, I related my research insecurities, and we often laughed at lot. Thus, in her course portfolio, Elif characterised her interview (together with Ronja) as "a lovely conversation between three people". Detachment from either the research 'objects' or 'subjects' in practitioner research could also be considered 'feigned' or pointless: in my case relationships had already been established between myself and the participants and they knew in advance that I saw potential value in arts-inspired tasks because I had chosen to employ them in class.

In this spirit of collaborative and critical academic inquiry, I explained to students what we were examining and why, and shared with them some of my emerging understanding of creative learning theories, as outlined in Chapter 2. It would be easy to argue that, by providing the participants with this information, I was superimposing my views on them and distorting their responses, but interview data is arguably always co-constructed in some form (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). In the case of this inquiry, providing transparency regarding the way knowledge was produced seemed more suitable than trying to

minimise my influence. In practice, offering participants some possible theories through which they could express their experiences proved advantageous as none of the participants was a native English speaker and perhaps had never previously been asked to reflect on the ways in which they might be learning. I did, however, take care to indicate that I was very willing to hear about how they experienced the arts-inspired tasks differently, or as potentially less valuable than other class activities. As class time had been spent in many different ways, it did not constitute personal criticism if participants rejected the artistic tasks and expressed, for example, a preference for more traditional methods such as group discussions or student presentations.

There is an argument against teachers interviewing their students at all on the grounds that students cannot possibly be open and honest with teachers who have so much power and so much invested in the situation (Seidman, 2006). However, I do not think this is necessarily the case if practitioner researchers are genuinely open to alternative perspectives and position themselves as learners. In one case, the issue of openness and honesty in student/teacher interviews was problematised in the interview itself, with Peter claiming that he personally felt able to be honest with me and preferred to talk to me rather than an unknown, external interviewer. That said, it would clearly be unrealistic to claim that hierarchical and other expectations were overcome. It can also be argued that the wide variety of cultures within which the participants have been socialised rendered our conversations particularly vulnerable to conflicting expectations or miscommunication. There are no easy answers, but it can be argued that openness and reciprocity can enhance understanding while a reflexive approach can "heighten the understanding of differences of ideologies, culture, and politics between interviewers and interviewees" (Fontana and Frey, 2005: 711).

4.4.3 Further Data Sources: My Researcher Diary, Course Documentation, and Recorded Conversations with 'Critical Friends'

The 'creative products' of two arts-inspired tasks carried out in class and subsequent interviews with student-participants form the main part of my data and this was supplemented by my copious notes recorded in my researcher diary

and reflective course portfolios produced by students. It seemed both impossible and undesirable to separate these data sources from my wider understanding of the course, my participants, and the socio-historical context within which we were (in some cases still are) working. Into the data mix therefore came 'backstage' insights from other conversations with students recorded in my researcher diary, participant information collected in class, emails, notes and course documentation, course feedback, and my own, subjective understandings of the people and places that constituted my case study.

Recorded conversations with my 'critical friends' Jens, Nina and Annette (all pseudonyms) also serve as a valuable record of my then-current thinking. These friends also provided impetus for reflection and different perspectives. Jens and Nina were able to observe my classes from a student perspective while Annette is my colleague and on the 'front line' in our department in her student advisory role. I also engaged the help of a recent graduate and friend, Sasha (pseudonym), who transcribed the vast majority of the research conversations. Sasha also acted as a 'critical friend' to the extent that she shared with me her own perspectives and experience after listening to the recordings with participants. Whilst I did not ask these friends to comment on my analysis of the data, their thinking helped inform my own readings of it.

4.5 Analysis and Representation of the Data

Case study research should perhaps not be considered a method in itself but rather a “design frame” that may draw on various methods and which is characterised by “analytical eclecticism” (Thomas and Myers, 2015: 6). A pluralist, integrated approach seems appropriate in a practitioner-led case study that seeks to explore student experience in a more holistic fashion. This section of the chapter outlines the approach taken to data analysis and representation of the findings and is split into three parts. Section 4.5.1 outlines the 'bricolage' approach taken in the research, section 4.5.2 explores the principle of abduction for data analysis, and section 4.5.3 discusses 'crystallization' as an approach to building a research text.

4.5.1 'Bricolage' in Qualitative Inquiry

At each stage of this study I sought the methods best suited for answering my research questions, employing a process of 'bricolage' that can be described as the harnessing of a diverse range of tools that best suit the unique circumstances of study (Atkinson, 2003; Denzin and Lincoln, 2013; Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). As a concept, 'bricolage' is not limited to the use of a variety of methods for data collection but also describes the analytical process and the way in which research findings are represented. In case study research, 'bricolage' seems a particularly suitable approach for creating new understandings of specific, complex situations with analysis and for describing the results of the process, with representations pieced together in a unique way that reflect the specifics of the case (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013).

As an understanding of methodology, 'bricolage' does not represent a step by step approach to research. Choices regarding interpretive practices are often not possible in advance and the resulting 'bricolage' is a changing and unpredictable construction that takes new forms as the researcher brings additional techniques and methods to the process of understanding (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013). Particularly productive in situations where the researcher needs to be responsive to changing circumstances or a variety of forms of data, 'bricolage' has been used within an interpretive paradigm in educational research to, for example, understand and co-construct language education in the context of the siege of the Gaza strip (Imperiale, 2018) and to ascertain the ways in which arts-based inquiry can foster reflection in pre-service teachers (Richards, 2012).

Kincheloe et al. (2011: 167) position 'bricolage' within critical pedagogical teacher research as an “emancipatory research construct” that takes into account the evolving criticality of the researcher. Operating within an interpretive paradigm, bricolage has the potential to highlight the relationships between the researcher's perspective and his or her positioning with the social context of the research. In the context of critical pedagogy, a bricolage approach can constitute a way of respecting and uncovering some of the complexity of the lived world while also enabling the researcher and participants

to work towards positive social change (Kincheloe et al., 2011).

Using 'bricolage', this study therefore attempts to do justice to some of the relationships and interconnections through which participants' and my own perspectives were constructed, whilst maintaining a high level of research self-consciousness. Although a 'bricolage' approach is not always appropriate with, for example, forms of narrative research arguably better able to 'give voice' to participants, it appears an appropriate over-arching approach for the study of unique, complex cases and is well-aligned with processes of abduction, as outlined below, and crystallization, which can be considered a more specific approach to 'bricolage' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013).

4.5.2 Abduction in Case Study Research: Engaging Theory to Inform Analysis

The principle of abduction proposed for case study research by Thomas and Myers (2015) also underpins Alvesson and Sköldberg's (2009) approach to reflexive methodology. For much case study research, it is argued that abduction, rather than induction, is the method actually used by many researchers (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009; Thomas and Myers, 2015). Abduction involves elements of both the inductive and deductive processes but is more than a simple mix of them in that the abductive process foregrounds understanding: data is analysed with the help of pre-conceived theories, which are then themselves successively modified and developed in light of underlying patterns that then emerge (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009). As they explain:

> Abduction starts from an empirical basis, just like induction, but does not reject theoretical preconceptions and is in that respect closer to deduction. The analysis of the empirical fact(s) may well be combined with, or preceded by, studies of previous theory in the literature; not as a mechanical application on single cases but as a source of inspiration for the discovery of patterns that bring understanding. The research process, therefore, alternates between (previous) theory and empirical facts whereby both are successively reinterpreted in the light of each other. (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009: 4)

Qualitative methodologist Brinkmann (2014) also encourages qualitative researchers to move away from inductive, data-driven research processes and deductive, theory-driven analysis, towards abductive reasoning in research. In abductive research processes, theories and methods are tools used in the process of understanding and analysis becomes more an intellectual process than a technical one (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009). There are myriad valid ways of approaching qualitative inquiry but in this particular study, from design to representation, I have aimed to be “the abductive tool-user, the bricoleur, the craftsperson” (Brinkmann, 2014: 722).

An abductive approach to analysis actively encourages the researcher to bring a variety of theoretical preconceptions to the research process, whilst continuously critically reflecting on and refining this knowledge. This stands in contrast to research approaches that consider the existence of researcher preconceptions problematic to establishing reliability and therefore encourage an attempt to 'bracket-off' such ideas to minimise bias in the findings. For this particular study, and perhaps practitioner case study research more generally, it can be argued that an abductive approach is more suitable as it enables the practitioner-researcher to capitalise on both insider knowledge and theories that already inform pedagogical praxis, apply these to the data, and harness the results to generate new, honed understandings of both preconceived ideas and the resulting analysis. For example, as I continued to explore the literature around my research topics, methodology and theory, I better understood how my own experience had led to the creation of the 'theories' I held about teaching and learning, which in turn had driven my praxis and the study itself. Uncovering these assumptions enabled me to view the data created in research conversations through alternative perspectives and theories I encountered, creating findings that are arguably more nuanced understandings. An open approach, which does not seek to read data through one particular theoretical lens, can open up a multitude of directions in and for analysis, and keep knowledge production from becoming closed down (Mazzei, 2014).

In my own processes of analysis, rather than using conventional coding practices that decontextualise participants' words, I attempted to “borrow concepts,

invent approaches, and create new assemblages" (St. Pierre and Jackson, 2014: 717). A recent research report commissioned by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018b) found that 'close-to-practice' research, of which practitioner research is a form, often fails to give an adequate account of data analysis. However, explaining abductive analytical processes that constitute a 'bricolage' approach is not straight-forward as they are emergent and experimental and cannot easily be "secured in the traditional linear process trajectory of data collection>analysis>representation" (St. Pierre and Jackson, 2014: 717). In this particular study, for example, the stages also merged into one another, with, for example, experimentations with representation generating understanding and analysis.

MacLure's (2013) description of her working processes resonates with my own experience:

> I enjoy that part of the research process that involves poring over the data, annotating, linking and bringing theory to bear, recalling what others have written, and seeing things from different angles. I like to do it "manually" too, with paper and pen, scribbling a dense texture of notes in margins and spilling over onto separate pages. (ibid.: 174)

Similarly, I started the process of analysis by printing out and working my way through the interview transcripts whilst re-listening to the original recordings and making copious notes of everything that appeared of interest in the margins. I was able to categorise the data into loose themes relating to areas such as the initial reception of the tasks, the process of working together with other students, ideas that developed while making, decisions over whether to include text in the collage, approach to the task, concepts in the collage etc. I 'collaged' certain parts of the data and attempted to map emerging themes on a large roll of paper that I stuck to the floor of my living room.

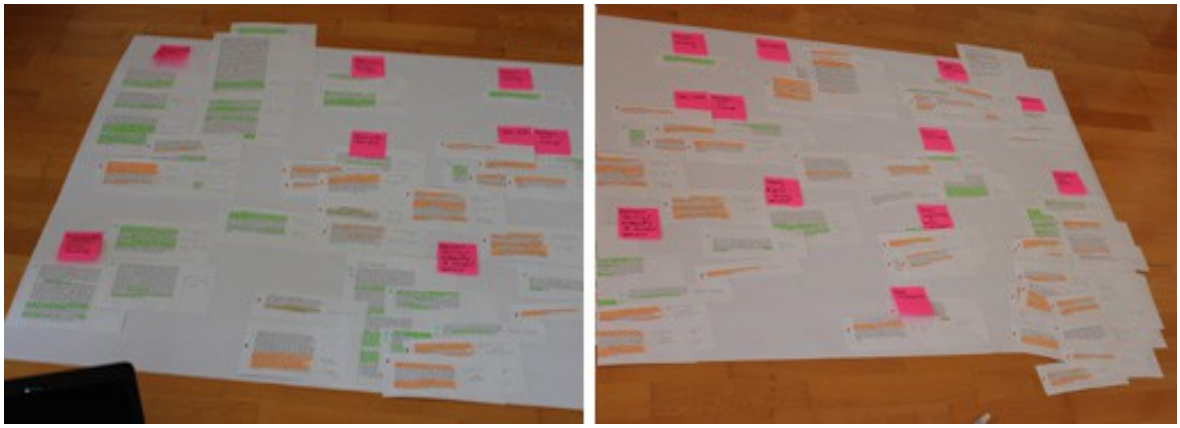

Illustration 4.3: Finding themes and connections

Initial analysis stimulated a great deal of further reading of new texts ranging from those dealing with learning theories (e.g. transformative learning) to theories of social acceleration and ways of viewing time in education. Whilst doing this, I also experimented with different ways of presenting data gathered from the research conversations such as the crafting of participant monologues from transcripts of the research conversations, and regularly wrote about how data gathered intersected with the theory I was reading. Mazzei argues that this process is

> not a matter of coding or thematizing according to a theorist or concept [but] is instead a moment of plugging in, of reading-the-data-while-thinking-the theory, of entering the assemblage, of making new connectives. (Mazzei, 2014: 743)

Suspending my studies for six months for personal reasons had the positive side-effect of allowing me to return to the raw data after a considerable time-gap and immerse myself in the original recordings of the research conversations and my tentative findings with fresh eyes, paying more attention to data that resisted easy categorisation. Like Augustine (2014), I found that data analysis practices surfaced unexpected ways in which data could be brought into relation with theory, for example with self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2017). For Augustine (2014: 752), analysis in such processes is "not simply coding data but the intermingling of data and theory after focused reading and copious amounts of writing". Time constraints notwithstanding, this was also the approach I took to analysis: writing became part of the inquiry process and

initial ideas led to the discovery of theories I had not envisaged when I carried out data collection.

4.5.3 Crystallization in Writing and Representation

In the representation of my findings I sought a form that could do justice to interpretative collisions and the variety of perspectives that are the nature of 'bricolage' (Kincheloe, 2005). Ellingson's (2009) conceptualisation of 'crystallization' has much to offer in this respect and can perhaps be best understood in comparison to triangulation, an established method for establishing validity in qualitative research. Originally borrowed from land surveying techniques which sought to pinpoint a position in space from measurements taken from three distinct points, triangulation deploys a variety of methods in order to cross-check the validity of research and strengthen the credibility of the findings (Rothbauer, 2008). This approach would seem to imply that there is a fixed, objective result that can be discovered through the research process and it has therefore been critiqued for its positivist assumptions about the nature of validity and reliability (Rothbauer, 2008; Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005).

Triangulation has, however, been conceived in contrasting ways. Stake (2005), for example, argues that triangulation helps identify diversity of perception and different realities in case study research and Cohen and Manion (2000) state that triangulation in educational research "constitutes an attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint" (ibid.: 254). For texts produced within a postmodern climate of doubt, Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) argue in favour of replacing the central image of the triangle with that of the crystal, through which what is seen is influenced by the angle from which it is viewed and which "combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach" (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005: 963). Thus, crystallization is potentially akin to some conceptions of triangulation, but the change of labelling arguably foregrounds diversity of perception and complexity rather than stable meanings and conclusions validated by the fact that they have been reached in more than

one analytical way.

For those who conceptualise crystallization, this shift from triangle to crystal has an impact on the text produced. In her development of crystallization as an emergent framework across the social sciences, Ellingson, a qualitative methodologist, encourages researchers to combine

> multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent text, or set of related texts, building a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that problematizes its own construction, highlights researchers' vulnerabilities and positionality, makes claims about socially constructed meanings, and reveals the interdeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes them. (Ellingson, 2009: 4)

Importantly for this study, crystallization processes encourage a “productive blending” (ibid.: 7) of art and science in qualitative inquiry which, rather than indicating a compromise, signals innovative and creative approaches to meaning making and representation of findings. This blending involves the inclusion or interweaving of more than one way of expressing data/findings from across the continuum of artistic/scientific research (Ellingson, 2009). Ellingson's own (2009) work on crystallization includes 'interludes' between chapters, through which the reader is offered a range of perspectives on the text and the author is able to position herself in relation to her work. This is the original inspiration behind the inclusion of 'interludes' in this thesis. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009: 171) maintain that a good research text should be pervaded by “inconsistencies, fragmentation, irony, self-reflection and pluralism” and, whilst I hope to present a convincing narrative through the main chapters of my thesis, this should not be one that closes off other understandings. Thus, I hope that the inclusion of 'interludes' in particular allow different understandings and meanings to leak through. Crystallization therefore represents a multi-genre approach that serves to deconstruct dichotomies between, for example, art and science, and potentially enables the researcher to cover the same ground in different ways in order to illuminate a topic from a variety of perspectives (Ellingson, 2009).

Crystallization would seem to be particularly suited for the representation of

case study findings. In an exploration of “the epistemology of the particular” in case study research Stake writes:

> Case study facilitates the conveying of experience of actors and stakeholders as well as the experience of studying the case. It can enhance the reader's experience with the case. It does this largely with narratives and situational descriptions of case activity, personal relationship and group interpretation. (Stake, 2005: 454)

Blending artistic forms of representation with such narratives and situational descriptions potentially enhances these opportunities for vicarious experience with the case and aims to maintain some of the original polyvocality, which, combined with my own text, I hope allows “further space for the reader to infer connections between the two” (Chamberlain et al., 2011: 155).

4.6 Reflections on the Methodology

In exposing the methodology in some detail, the principal goal is not to render the study replicable, but to increase the validity through transparency. However, as Richardson and St. Pierre (2005: 961) have pointed out, “[n]o textual staging is ever innocent”. Mannay (2016) points out that insider researchers have been accused of presenting their participants in too favourable a light and, particularly in the case of practitioner research, the researcher may also face charges of presenting their own praxis this way. There is, therefore, a need for practitioner research to go “beyond celebration”, ensuring that the narrative does not gloss over uncomfortable findings (Mockler and Groundwater-Smith, 2015). Concerning the presentation of a convincing narrative in research findings more generally, I did not necessarily approach 'bricolage' as a quilt maker who aimed to bring a harmonious pattern to the interpretive experience by piecing together “slices of reality” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013: 9). Rather, I aimed also to do justice to gaps, inconsistencies and problematic phenomena, or data “hot spots”, that defy a pattern (MacLure, 2013: 172). These two approaches can, however, exist together. MacLure writes,

> It is imperative to slow down the facile machinery of interpretation so

> that it catches on the snags, the 'lucky' finds, the marginalia and the odd details that fascinate the researcher and draw her into the weave of discourse, instead of allowing her to rise above it. (MacLure, 2013: 174)

Stake (2005) points out that researcher and reader bring differing conceptual structures to a text and that, regardless of the clarity of the writing, some meanings will be passed on and others will not. Equally, readers will engage in "reconstituting the knowledge in ways that leave it differently connected and more likely to be personally useful" (Stake, 2005: 455). This can be claimed of communication and learning more generally, with the nature of all statements "notoriously indeterminate" (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009: 279). This acknowledgement also points back to the conceptual gap between my participants' utterances and my understandings of them, the size of which is potentially increased by the different environments in which we were socialised and our lack of a shared first language. Difficult choices were made when presenting the participants' words. For example, although conversations were transcribed verbatim, I later 'smoothed out' the participants' English in my findings, removing, for example, grammar and vocabulary errors I recognised. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) point out that this move increases readability, but it also hides potential misunderstandings from the reader. To a certain extent, participants' voices are always filtered in research reports, particularly when their words are whittled down by the researcher, but it is hoped that an awareness of the pitfalls of assuming shared understanding can go some way towards mitigating misunderstandings.

In interview, it became clear that data was being co-constructed rather than simply existing in the minds of my participants and requiring elicitation. For example, Elif's reflective course portfolio states, "When discussing it with Liz later in her office, I realized that essentially [my collage] was my way of showing my gratitude to my mother". In another example, when I asked Mai about the significance of one feature of her collage, she bounced the question back and asked, "Well, what do *you* think it means?". Acknowledging my own influence in uncovering/distorting/constructing meaning in the interviews themselves was not always comfortable, but, as Mannay argues,

> rather than trying to engender a 'true' account and employing participatory methods to elicit a singular perspective or 'give voice' to an individual participant, the “intrusive presence' of […] the researcher could potentially offer more nuanced accounts” (Mannay, 2016: 57).

This element of co-construction can be considered part and parcel of working within a paradigm of social science which considers meanings always “negotiated, revised and co-constructed” (ibid.: 59). Again, I believe that transparency increases research validity in this respect.

Denzin and Lincoln position the interpretive bricoleur as a researcher who

> understands that research is an interactive process shaped by one's personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity and those of the people in the setting. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013: 11)

What can never really be accounted for though, is precisely *how* these webs of people and relationships interact in the research process. Fortunately, the approaches to research outlined here have fairly modest aims and the goal of this case study is to contribute to the ongoing praxis in intercultural education in HE as opposed to providing what Flyvbjerg (2001: 139) labels “ultimate, unequivocally verified knowledge”. While I consider my findings hard-won products of what Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) term “reflexive interpretation”, other interpretations are surely possible.

4.7 Summary of Chapter 4

This chapter has outlined the study's methodological orientation, data collection processes, and the approaches to analysis and representation of my findings. I provided a rationale for the research design, grounding my inquiry in collaborative and critical conceptions of practitioner research which capitalise on the researcher's subjectivity and emphasise reflexivity in the processes of inquiry. I then argued that this form of inquiry can be productively framed as in-depth case study research which aims to generate nuanced, exemplary

understandings that contribute to the ongoing production of knowledge. The study also aimed to capitalise on the creative possibilities afforded by qualitative research, situating visual images as research artefacts and harnessing them for the facilitation of further data. Questions of ethics permeate practitioner research and so this chapter not only documents institutional ethical approval but also discusses my attempts to enact an “ethical praxis of responsibility” (Frimberger, 2017: 30).

The majority of data were collected in two phases and centred around two arts-inspired tasks that students were given in my 'Intercultural Communication' course (winter semester 2015/16). In Week 4 of the course, the class was asked to collaborate in small intercultural groups to create posters on the subject of 'culture'. After the lesson, I invited students to reflect on their experience of this task with me in individual or small group interviews and those who volunteered then became research participants. In Week 13, students were asked to create individual collages on the theme of 'intercultural competence' and were then again invited to a second phase of interviews. A variety of other data sources informed this study, such as recorded conversations with 'critical friends' and my own researcher diary.

Data analysis was a process of 'bricolage' enabled by abductive thinking as I engaged in a continuous process of reflection on the intersections between the data itself, my theoretical preconceptions, theory discovered in the process of trying to explain the data, and the new, emerging understandings. I did not attempt to read the data through one particular theoretical lens but endeavoured to achieve a holistic interpretation that provided insightful answers to my original research question. This thesis aims to present coherent research results although the inclusion of artistic work and student voices in the 'interludes' should allow for different perspectives to leak through.

The following two chapters present the research findings, which are divided into two areas. Chapter 5 analyses the value of the artistic tasks for engaged and creative thinking in HE, while Chapter 6 builds on the findings presented in Chapter 5 to consider the value of the artistic tasks for CICP specifically.

I N T E R L U D E

Uncomfortable 'Research Questions': My Collage

I originally planned to create an identity/positionality collage, but I'd barely started when the process led me back to questions that have preoccupied me during the creation of this thesis, and which I'm often trying to push aside. So, collaging for me became primarily a process of acknowledging and collecting. It felt satisfying to stabilise my own personal 'research questions' in one space and be able to examine them from a distance, while the images also left room for meanings and connections to shift. Some of the questions captured or elicited by the collage are:

How much control do I have over the type of researcher I become? Where's the line between an exploration and an investigation? What is thrown into shadow when the spotlight is shone on phenomenon X? What are my assumptions about student feedback and how has this translated into a research strategy? What kind of practitioner research is useful? What about the students who didn't become participants? Is 24 a healthy number of participants or has it become a curse? Is the research aligned to the pedagogy? Does it matter if it isn't? Am I cooking a meal I wouldn't want to eat?

And of 'bricolage': at what point does resourcefulness or improvisation become fool-hardy? Is synthesis always appropriate? Or does it sometimes result in strange shapes that are of no use to anyone? How much can or should remain tangled up or left

open? Where have my students gone? Is intuition valuable when you are a novice? Is this my thesis?

I am convinced that 'bracketing off' my assumptions or values throughout the research process is impossible, but what degree of reflexivity *is* possible? How do I unpack the stories I've constructed about who I am? Do I need therapy to complete a PhD to the best of my ability? What does 'the best of my ability' look like anyhow? Can critical reflection destabilise me to the extent that I can't get the job done? Am I being unreasonable? What is the impact of constantly calling into question everything I'm doing? Which rabbit holes should I embrace as part of an adaptive methodology and which are best left well alone?

I N T E R L U D E

Vulnerabilities and Values

Mining my own autobiography for insight into the ways in which my educational background has shaped my teacher identity and values has been invaluable, but it has involved revisiting uncomfortable as well as joyful experiences. Brookfield (1995) encourages teachers to uncover our own assumptions as part of a process of coming to know ourselves. Carrying out this research has caused me to feel vulnerable in different ways and at different times, but above all I've felt vulnerable as a university teacher:

Personal reflection (25 January 2016):

The anxieties that keep me awake at night are tied up in my identity as a teacher, not in my ability to carry out valid research per se. I worry about the wisdom of deciding to undertake practitioner research. I mean, surely you'd only choose to examine and write about your own teaching if you thought you were fabulous, and that's not at all what I think. I'm worried about the emotional demands of this project and about being distracted by the 'internal noise' that has me questioning my abilities or goals.

The nagging feeling that I am not a 'good' teacher is not related to the work I've done in my current job, but rather my experiences on the CELTA course that I did way back in 2000, and the PGCE that I started but left after 4 months. Neither was enjoyable and I still attach an awful lot of shame to my struggle to complete them. I had always believed I would be a great teacher ('a natural', in fact!), so negative feedback from those observing me was quite traumatic because I felt that both my identity and even my purpose in life were being called into question. Now, at times, I'm embarrassed to explain my research to my students. This isn't because I don't believe in it, but because on some level I still don't believe that I am a good enough teacher (in their eyes and my own) and therefore haven't earned the 'right' to carry it out and share my experience with others.

My written reflections at different points of the research process also reveal some of the ways in which this insecurity directly undermined my attempts to live out the pedagogical values I espouse in Chapter 3 of this thesis. With one eye on the fact that I would later have to expose my entire IC course to the gaze of others within my thesis, I designed my classes to tick all the boxes that experience has taught me are associated with notions of 'best practice' and 'effective teaching'. However, this did little to enhance the atmosphere and cohesion in class:

Personal reflection (30 November 2015):

I feel that we weren't able to build community in class in Week 1, at least not compared to previous classes: the students didn't seem to gel with one another or seem confident in class discussions. Perhaps I had over-planned it - I was very organized and everything 'worked' well enough, but there wasn't a sense that the students were relaxed or enjoying the activities, even though it was possibly the best planned lesson I've ever 'delivered'!

But then, perhaps the clue to the difference in class atmosphere lies precisely in the idea of 'delivery' and I wonder now whether I robbed the class of some of its usual messiness and spontaneity and the students of their own role in creating the class. I definitely deviated from my usual approach and the first few classes have been far more tightly structured than usual. This is certainly a result of the (imagined?) pressure to teach a class that at least would impress someone reading the lesson plan.

It seems that the prospect of renewed institutional gaze led me to overwrite the flexible, responsive approach to pedagogy that I had honed over the years as a university teacher with teaching approaches espoused by others. So, what I thought I should be doing (and who I thought I should be) in class changed as I made myself accountable to 'experts' rather than myself and the students present. I had wanted to create a class atmosphere in which the students would feel comfortable experimenting but instead of modelling a risk-taking approach, I modelled perfect planning approach that (theoretically, at least) left little room for anything to 'go wrong'. In the spring of 2016, when I came to teach the course again and was no longer collecting data for this thesis, I recognised another way in which I'd neglected my own values:

Personal reflection (19 April 2016):

What a difference six months make... I was so much more relaxed in Week 1 than last semester, no doubt because I won't examine it to death. Also, I decided to use the same basic structure for the class and when I went back to look at the worksheets (in particular the 'culture star') I was amazed. Last semester I'd included cultural theory in what is essentially a community building task and used academic vocabulary that I couldn't possibly expect students to understand if they had no experience of studying IC in English. What was I thinking?!? This time I went for a far simpler version and the students seemed a lot happier.

In retrospect, it seems clear to me that in the semester in which data was collected for this study, my priority in Week 1 had been to prove myself as an academically credible and technically competent teacher (and impress the audience of

my thesis) rather than create room for spontaneity and a space in which students could feel comfortable when expressing themselves. Quite in contrast to my espoused aims of reducing the hierarchy between myself and my students, or fostering the development of their voices and confidence, I'm sure that my approach left at least some of them overwhelmed and stressed, even if (or perhaps because) they were impressed by my academic knowledge, teaching methods or 'time management'. I made the class about others having confidence in me rather than my students having confidence in themselves.

The atmosphere and engagement in the class improved over the course of the semester as I rediscovered faith in my own professional judgement. Reading the work of critical thinkers and teachers such as bell hooks and Ira Shor helped me recognise that I needed to finally shake off an image of a 'good teacher' that had never suited me. Orienting my teaching around the key principles of critical pedagogy also helped me develop the language and confidence to defend an approach to teaching that feels more empowering for my students, but also for me as I struggle to enact my values. There remain many challenging ways in which I feel that my pedagogy still does not match up to these values (such as 'labelling' students according to their nationality, reinforcing the dominance of English as the classroom language, and imposing my own Anglo-American standards on student presentations) but it seems particularly important that I continue to work on uncovering and resisting the ways in which my own biography and vulnerabilities undermine my values and goals as part the “ongoing process of generative transformational self-realization” that McNiff and Whitehead (2009: 317) claim is integral to practitioner research.

Chapter 5 | Findings: Engaged, Creative Thinking for Embodied Learning

I feel like I'm awake when I do this kind of task.

(Elif, personal communication, 25th Nov 2015)

5.1 Introduction to Chapter 5

This chapter presents findings that reveal the value of working in embodied, creative ways from the students' perspectives. It draws on participants' responses to being given the two creative tasks outlined in the previous chapter to elucidate the ways in which they approached the tasks and identify the most significant features of working creatively. In this chapter, the focus lies firmly on how the participants themselves viewed the tasks. The ability of the tasks to achieve my own CICP-related goals, the over-arching research question, will be examined in Chapter 6. Thus, the research questions primarily addressed here are:

- To what extent and in which ways did participants value the creative, arts-inspired tasks? (RQ2)
- How did the participants approach the tasks and what role did the creative process play? (RQ3)

The chapter is divided into four sections. Firstly, this introduction explains the chapter's structure, indicates which data were harnessed, and presents an overview of the themes that emerged in the processes of analysis (Table 5.1). Section 5.2 demonstrates how carrying out the tasks was, in most cases, viewed as contributing to student motivation and engagement and is organised around the first six subthemes presented in Table 5.1. It examines the variety of initial responses to the tasks, which ranged from excitement and a feeling of relief to insecurity and uneasiness. In many cases, both the negative and positive reactions students initially felt were found to stem from the open nature of creative ways of working, and the students' unfamiliarity with these methods. Section 5.3 deals with the second set of subthemes presented in Table 5.1. It discusses the role of the creative process in enabling students to generate and

express original and sophisticated ideas, and also examines cases in which engagement in the creative arts-inspired tasks did not seem to foster this development. The chapter ends with a summary of initial findings, upon which the analysis presented in Chapter 6 builds.

Research questions addressed	Overarching theme	Subtheme	
Chapter 5: Engaged Creative Thinking for Embodied Learning			
To what extent and in which ways did the participants value the creative, arts-inspired tasks? (RQ2)	Creative, Arts-inspired Tasks For Motivation and Engagement	Creative Ways of Working as a Break from the Norm	*5.2.1*
		Creative Tasks as Active, Embodied Learning	*5.2.2*
		Clear Goals and Tangible Products as Motivating Factors	*5.2.3*
		Students' Initial Concerns	*5.2.4*
		Insecurity and Scepticism Reframed as 'Productive Discomfort and Constraints'	*5.2.5*
		Freedom, Autonomy and Full Participation in Personally Meaningful Learning	*5.2.6*
How did the participants approach the tasks and what role did the creative process play? (RQ3)	The Creative Process for Creative Thinking	The Generation of Ideas in the Creative Process	*5.3.1*
		Collage Images for Inspiration and Structure	*5.3.2*
		Inhibiting Creative Thinking?: Collaging Pre-conceived Ideas	*5.3.3*
		Avoiding the Limitations of Language in Artistic Tasks?	*5.3.4*
		Absorption in the Creative Process	*5.3.5*
		Creative Tasks and Learning that 'Sticks'	*5.3.6*
Chapter 6: Creative, Arts-inspired Tasks for Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy (CICP)			
(How) is carrying out creative, arts-inspired tasks such as collaging and making posters valuable for learning in my Intercultural Communication course? (RQ1)	Creative 'Products' for Reflective and Constructive Thinking	The Group 'Culture' Posters: Fostering Reflective Thinking	*6.2.1*
		× *The SuperCulture Market* × *The Culture Test* × *The Culture Tree* × *Think Outside of the Box!* × *The Venn Diagram*	
		The Intercultural Competence Collages: Collaging for Unique Meaning-making	*6.2.2*
		× *Christophe* × *Katharina* × *Xiu*	
		Reflective Engagement with Scholarly Texts	*6.2.3*
	Creative Collaboration as CICP: The 'Culture' Poster	Generative Communication as 'Collaborative Emergence'	*6.3.1*
		Natural Conversation and Enhanced Interpersonal Connections	*6.3.2*
		Personal Investment for Enhanced Interpersonal Connections	*6.3.3*
		When Creative Collaboration Fell Short	*6.3.4*
	SharingArtistic Work as CICP: The 'Intercultural Competence' Collages	Fostering an Appreciation of Multiple Perspectives	*6.4.1*
		Fostering Self-Reflection	*6.4.2*
		Fostering Communicative Awareness	*6.4.3*

Table 5.1: Emerging themes and subthemes, with chapter section numbers

Data explored in this chapter are drawn from the two phases of participant interviews and occasionally portfolio entries, with the two creative tasks under examination dealt with simultaneously to allow thematic strands to emerge. Within the text, quotations from participants that were taken from the first interview phase are labelled IP1, and quotations from the second interview phase are labelled IP2. Transcript page numbers are also provided. As the two arts-inspired tasks were carried out in different ways (the first within a small group and the second individually) and did not always generate responses along similar themes, some sections of this chapter deal with both the creation of the group poster and the individual collage, while other sections focus on one activity only. In Chapter 6, in contrast, the two arts-inspired activities are dealt with separately throughout.

5.2 Creative, Arts-Inspired Tasks for Motivation and Engagement

In this section I focus on the first six subthemes listed in Table 5.1 to show how working on creative, arts-inspired tasks elicited a variety of responses that demonstrate their capacity to foster motivation and student engagement. Section 5.2.1 shows how creative ways of working were often primarily considered a welcome break from usual ways of learning, section 5.2.2 demonstrates how the tasks were valued as active, embodied modes of learning, and section 5.2.3 suggests that the existence of clear goals and the creation of tangible products were motivating factors. Section 5.2.4 presents the variety of initial concerns that a significant number of participants felt on being given the tasks, while 5.2.5 reframes these concerns as 'productive discomfort' that can contribute positively to the creative process and thereby to learning. Lastly, section 5.2.6 deals with the positive impact of the autonomy the tasks were considered to afford students. Before dealing with each of these subthemes in turn, I first set the scene by briefly explaining my own initial concerns as course teacher, and the understanding of student motivation and engagement that informs these findings.

Before carrying out this research, and despite positive reactions to drawing, moulding and poster-making tasks from students in previous semesters, I was

prepared for a considerable amount of scepticism. Although the literature outlining the benefits of working in more artistic ways in HE is persuasive (see, for example, Dewey, 1934, Greene, 1995; Eisner, 2005; James and Brookfield, 2014; Sefton-Green et al., 2011), I was still concerned that creative methods would be seen as unacademic or simply unproductive. Understanding the students' overall assessment of the tasks and their openness to them was therefore crucial for gaining insight into how to design and present such tasks, if at all.

In the event, reactions to the creative tasks were overwhelmingly positive and some students were very enthusiastic. For example, Christophe felt "kind of excited" about the individual collaging task (IP2: 1) and Mai said her reaction to being given the group poster task had been "Yes, let's do it!" (IP1: 6). Although some students certainly got more out of the tasks than others, none of the participants stated that they had found the creative tasks too difficult or pointless, and the enjoyable, "fun" aspects of carrying out the tasks identified, for example, by Ronja (IP1: 1) and Katharina (IP2: 1), were not presented in opposition to 'serious' or 'important' learning, with Klara stating that "a poster is making something important in a fun way" (IP1: 4). As Yuwei put it,

> *The collage still is work, an assignment in the course, and it's among the best assignments we have to do. It's interesting and not too difficult. […] I thought about it more deeply and had fun making decisions about how I should represent things, for example.* (Yuwei, IP2: 3)

These comments reflect the sentiments that run through other remarks students made, and in most cases the tasks were seen as contributing to learning the participants considered "important".

In the context of this case study, the pleasure that students expressed can generally be considered as contributing to student motivation and engagement. Student motivation is generally understood as "the inclination, energy, emotion and drive relevant to learning" while engagement is defined as the behaviours

which reflect this motivation (Martin et al., 2017: 150). Thus, motivation can be considered an internal, psychological force, while engagement is most often regarded as the observable behaviours that correspond to this psychological drive. Although student engagement is often conceived as resulting from motivation, recent research suggests that it is rather a cyclical process (Martin et al., 2017). This is a conclusion that reflects what many, including critical educator Paulo Freire, have come to believe about motivation, namely that motivation and engagement are dialectically linked. In conversation with Ira Shor, Freire states:

> Motivation takes part *in* the action. It is a moment of the very action itself. That is, you become motivated to the extent that you are acting, and not before acting. (Shor and Freire, 1987: 4-5, emphasis in the original.)

Thus, for the purposes of this analysis, student motivation and engagement are considered distinct but mutually dependent factors in the learning process, with internal motivation considered likely to impact positively on levels of engagement, and engagement likely to have a positive impact on levels of motivation. With this in mind, this chapter now turns to a detailed exploration of the six subthemes that were identified as relevant for fostering motivation and engagement.

5.2.1 Creative Ways of Working as a Break from the Norm

Several students framed their enthusiasm around the fact that carrying out creative, arts-inspired tasks constituted a break from the norm. I suspected that students had little opportunity to work in creative or artistic ways in other university courses and these students confirmed this impression. For Martin, the tasks were "interesting" because they were "so different from everything else you do" (IP2: 6). Katharina "really enjoyed" the collaging activity and considered it "kind of like a break from your usual studies" (IP2: 6) while Klara found the poster-making activity "a really nice change" and appreciated working "in a different way than is usually associated with university" (IP1: 1).

Some comments seem to indicate that appreciation of the tasks stemmed specifically from the fact that artistic methods offer an alternative to language-driven ways of working. For example, Ronja said:

> *I really enjoyed it and I think it's the only course of mine that includes creative work: everything else is like listening, writing.* (Ronja, IP1: 1)

In Esther, Marie and Laura's comments, a weariness of the usual methods of teaching and learning was palpable. Esther, who stated that she considered herself a creative person, regretted the lack of opportunity to work creatively in university and the focus on "text, text, text" that she experienced (IP2: 6). Laura also welcomed the task as "something different" that contrasted with the invariability of listening and reading in university courses which she characterised as "always the same procedure" (IP1: 9). That the course took place on Friday afternoon is perhaps significant for understanding why students might be feeling a heightened degree of ennui and need for "a break":

> *For me, it was like a relief that I didn't have to read another text […] I had classes before and I was just so happy that I didn't have to do anything more like that.* (Marie, IP1: 6)

These students seem to have identified a deficit in the range of modalities employed in teaching and learning across their degree programmes. Laura's desire for multiple methods for learning is indicative of how some students actively seek out unfamiliar ways of learning, and contrasts with literature that warns that student preferences for the familiar may act as a barrier to creative approaches (e.g. Carlile and Jordan, 2012). Marie's remark that participating in the artistic tasks came as "a relief" demonstrates that some students are dissatisfied with the dominant form of classroom activity encountered across their studies. In general, creative work was often appreciated as "something different", which would seem to indicate a desire for a wider range of learning

modalities rather than the abandonment of conventional methods of working. Also, as James and Brookfield (2014) maintain, it is likely that any group of learners will have multiple learning preferences, perhaps even more so in a class of students of multiple nationalities and cultural backgrounds, and using a variety of approaches to teaching and learning arguably creates a fairer, more inclusive learning environment.

Lena and Jessica also revealed that they viewed the creative tasks as an opportunity to produce their own knowledge, in contrast to ways of working that involve memorising information. Jessica, who was in her fifth semester, stated:

> *I think it's a great thing to do. Especially because at university you never do anything like that, never being creative. People get so busy learning facts and not being creative or productive themselves. And it's so much to learn and semesters just go by with that.*
> (Jessica, IP2: 1)

When I was outlining the individual collaging task (aimed at surfacing and developing personalised notions of intercultural competence) at the start of the class, Jessica asked if she could use her phone to carry out some research before embarking on it. In interview, Lena believed Jessica's request stemmed from the fact that students are not in the habit of engaging in active learning:

> *I think it's the students' first reaction to anything to look it up a lot. I think we are not used to doing something ourselves. Maybe that's also the reason why I thought [the collage] was so much fun to do, because I just had the materials given and I could only do something with them.* (Lena, IP2: 6)

In the comments above, both Jessica and Lena indicate that the opportunity to work actively to produce something was welcomed and viewed as a rupture from the norm. In contrast to learning that keeps students "busy learning facts", as Jessica put it, arts-inspired, creative ways of working were characterised as

"productive" and "doing something ourselves". This contrast seems reminiscent of the difference between what Paulo Freire describes as "the banking concept" of education, in which students are positioned as passive "receptacles" who are "filled" with information, and emancipatory education in which knowledge is viewed as the product of inquiry, critical thinking and the students' creative power (Freire, 1970). The following sections explore the engaging nature of these more active ways of working in more specific ways.

5.2.2 Creative Tasks as Active, Embodied Learning

Around half the participants stated that they particularly appreciated the embodied, active nature of the creative tasks, and spoke specifically about the enjoyment of tasks that involve physical engagement, or "working with our hands" (Xiu, IP2: 1):

> *I really loved the lesson because you really could think or express yourself in a different form than speaking. And that's what I liked about it because for myself, I really enjoy being creative and doing stuff.* (Lena, IP2: 1)

> *After a whole day of classes just reading texts, I have to say that it's really very nice for me to come to this class and actually do something. I mean, we also read texts but if we do something creative, that's always nice.* (Peter, IP1: 5)

Comments made by other participants demonstrate how this active, physical participation in the task could be viewed as relaxing, with Marie positioning "the feeling that I could relax" as part of "a relief that we could do something" (Marie, IP1: 6), and Xiu making the point that the "fun" she had in carrying out the task counteracted the stress she often associated with learning at university (Xiu, IP2: 3).

Although the novelty of the tasks was clearly part of their attraction, as shown

in the previous section, this did not necessarily mean that students would not want to engage in working in such ways more regularly. When I suggested to Caroline that the attraction of the tasks might lie in the alternative nature of embodied, creative tasks, she agreed but maintained:

> *I also think that it wouldn't be bad to do these kind of exercises more often so that they become normal. Because it's still an alternative to only verbally concentrated learning and only repeating theories over and over again. Because it would still force you to use some other skills and to connect skills in your head and to find an individual way to work on that topic. It wouldn't be that bad if it became normal.* (Caroline, IP2: 11)

Thus, physically engaged ways of learning appeared to allow students to approach things from new angles, whilst also accommodating some students' preferences for expressing themselves visually rather than in writing. These students seemed particularly pleased to be working in more active, physical ways because “actually doing something is a lot more fun” (Elif, IP1: 1). Caroline's comments above also reflect the belief that working creatively in HE can cultivate more independent thinking and knowing, moving beyond learning that centres on the accumulation of the body of subject knowledge selected by academics (Carlile and Jordan, 2012).

5.2.3 Clear Goals and Tangible Products as Motivating Factors

Rather surprising was the finding that the tasks could be viewed as providing students with a clear goal and that this, together with the creation of a tangible artistic 'end-product', would be viewed as motivating features of the tasks by some students. In setting up the creative tasks I had been mindful that over-emphasis on the creative product (i.e. the aesthetic or scholarly value of the finished collage or poster) could deter students from engaging in the task, and, consequently, I placed more emphasis on the exploratory process of working on a creative task than the completed work. Rather as I had intended, Louise felt

that her group had been absorbed in the process rather than focussed on the final version of the poster, or the conclusions it would present:

> *When we were doing the poster, we were not interested by the ending, or what it would look like. We talked about how we were going to do it, and who was going to do what. It was more the process than the end. We were happy to have a great poster, of course, but that was not the main thing.* (Louise, IP1: 3)

However, around a quarter of the participants, such as Anne, Klara, Sarah and Mai, also spoke positively about the fact that the creative tasks offered clearer aims to work towards than other, more conventional forms of working they encountered in our class, particularly group discussions. Reflecting on the collaborative group poster task, comments included:

> *In a discussion you don't really have an aim, compared to a creative task [where it's clear] what we have to do in the end. In a discussion, it's just like, 'where is this leading?'* (Anne, IP1: 10)

> *When I'm doing those [creative] things, I feel like they have an aim. And when we are doing the things we are doing, I can see that there is a point.* (Klara, IP1: 1)

The comments Anne and Klara make here would seem to support Csikszentmihalyi's (1997) finding that clear goals are essential to enjoyment and engagement in creative tasks. Hennessey's (2010) research into the connections between creativity and motivation also identified the significance of goals for enhancing motivation. In the case of the creative tasks undertaken in class, the students did not have pre-defined learning objectives to fulfil but they did have a specific task to complete. This seemed to have satisfied these students' desire for tasks with a clear goal, while leaving room for open-ended exploration, improvisation and “artful wondering and wondering” (Sameshima, 2009: 13), as

detailed in Section 5.3.

The clear goal in the case of both creative tasks was the completion of a tangible, creative 'product' and Peter also felt that the visible development of the poster increased engagement in the task:

> *If you see something growing while you're doing creative stuff, that maybe encourages you to work harder. It did for us.* (Peter, IP1: 8)

Peter's comments, along with those above, perhaps indicate that the dichotomy often drawn between the process-oriented and product-oriented ways of viewing creative activity may be a false one. Clear goals that are oriented around the end product did not seem to preclude experimentation and exploration in the creative process, as discussed later in the chapter, and the completion of the collage or poster was able to serve as a motivating and engaging factor, as previous research suggests.

5.2.4 Students' Initial Concerns

However, it is also important to acknowledge that not all students were enthusiastic from the outset about carrying out the creative tasks. In interview, participants were asked specifically about their initial reactions because, although they all completed the tasks and voiced no protest in class, an understanding of the ways in which students may have felt challenged, sceptical or disengaged can usefully inform decisions about how to present and position such tasks. Caroline spoke of the risk inherent in introducing unfamiliar ways of working when she stated:

> *Of course, facing something unusual either helps you think creatively and think on a bigger scale than before, or adapt your knowledge, or it can make you stop right away because you don't want to enter that field. That's the danger.* (Caroline, IP2: 12)

New methods of working can feel risky for students, with uncomfortable feelings increasing the flow of adrenaline and potentially leading some students to avoid engaging in unfamiliar activities (James and Brookfield, 2014: 10). Thus, although students should feel challenged to step out of their comfort zones, it was important that they felt in a position to accept this challenge and understanding their concerns helped me consider my role in providing reassurance, or in scaffolding learning in these activities. Scholars interested in creativity such as Holzman (2018), Csikszentmihalyi (1997) and Eisner (2002) have highlighted the need for skills and challenges to be balanced to avoid frustration and allow growth, as is important for learning more generally, so assessing the degree to which the artistic tasks had achieved this balance was therefore important. The concerns that students voiced can be divided into four areas: perceived lack of knowledge, uncertainty concerning how to proceed, time pressure, and the perceived degree of effort required to complete a creative task. These areas are outlined below, with the following section 5.2.5 demonstrating that these fears proved largely unfounded and can instead be considered beneficial to the learning process.

Particularly when it came to the individual collage task, almost half of the participants reported initially feeling disoriented or overwhelmed and in several cases these concerns seemed to be linked to the theme of the collage itself and students' perceived lack of knowledge. At this stage of the semester, the students had not been given scholarly work that specifically addressed the notion of intercultural competence because I wanted them to be able to develop and articulate their own ideas and theories. This perceived lack of knowledge led to some students initially feeling insecure about what they would be able to express in their collages:

> *I felt quite overwhelmed [when you gave us the collage task] because the task wasn't really precise and personally, I haven't really engaged with that topic before. I didn't really know what to do. I knew what you wanted us to do, but I didn't really know what my collage might look like. I had no idea.* (Anne, IP2: 13)

> *With me, usually, I just come up with a plan quite quickly, but with this one I just did not know what to do. I didn't really know how to cope with intercultural competence.* (Elif, interview IP2: 2)

Yuwei (IP2: 3) said that she was only able to think of "buzzwords like 'globalisation'" on being given the task and Jessica asked if she could use her phone to search for 'intercultural competence' on the internet. This insecurity is not surprising given that, as discussed in section 5.2.1, some participants felt they were not in the habit of developing their own ideas in university work. As course teacher, I nevertheless felt confident that the experience of participating in the course thus far had indeed equipped students with the personal experience and background knowledge necessary to complete the task.

In other cases, again regarding the individual collaging task, disorientation seemed to lie in concerns about how to approach an artistic task more generally:

> *At first, I didn't know what to expect, what I should be preparing, or how well I should do that.* (Lena, IP2: 1)

> *I think for me, and the others sitting next to me, they were a bit confused too. And we were just looking at each other like, 'What does she mean?'* (Marie, IP2: 1)

Even if students had experienced collaging, it was unlikely to have featured in their coursework at university. Sarah described the task as "kind of like a shock" as, she felt, students are unfamiliar with such open tasks. Sarah's initial opinion was that collaging task felt "far too open" and with "far too many options" (IP2: 14).

Three students stated that they had welcomed the task but felt under pressure to produce something satisfactory and aesthetically pleasing "on the spot", or within the time available. Jessica stated:

> *I like being creative a lot in different kinds of ways […] but sometimes when I'm asked to do it on the spot, I get stuck. […] I get so annoyed at myself when I think of something better afterwards. Because the more I think about it, the more ideas I get. And then I find more things I want to express.* (Jessica, IP2: 1)

Lena and Caroline also indicated that they initially considered the limited time available a concern. Lena considered it "stressful" and felt under pressure to decide quickly about the most efficient way to approach the task (IP2: 1). Caroline also "felt so pressured to get a result in that time that I sort of gave up on the idea of reaching a result I would really like" (Caroline, IP2: 1). However, these concerns were expressed as initial reactions to the task and, while it is important to acknowledge and understand them, the following section will consider the advantages of working within a limited time frame.

A further, albeit fainter, strand of critique centred around the perceived additional energy students would have to invest in carrying out creative tasks. Although neither of the other students interviewed at the same time shared his view, Alex mentioned that the effort involved in carrying out creative tasks may discourage students from getting involved:

> *I think often the first reaction is, "Oh, really?!" Because [students] associate it with the effort they have to put in. […] I think if you look back when you're done, you realise that is wasn't really that much effort, but it's the first thing you think when you hear what you have to do.* (Alex, IP1: 3/5)

Anne also pointed out the increased work involved in the collage task as compared to a more 'usual' poster task where students are asked to visually present something they have already learned about:

> *I just think sometimes..., for some people it's easier to..., or in general it's easier if someone tells you, 'social competence, or cultural competence, is that and that'. Then you're just representing*

> *these ideas on a collage rather than thinking about it and coming up with your own ideas. [What we did is] basically more work. Coming up with your own concept is more work than just representing somebody else's concept of it.* (Anne, IP2: 15)

It seems highly likely that producing knowledge rather than consuming it does indeed require effort and is "more work", as Anne puts it, but it can be argued that development and growth do require a level of challenge and the investment of effort. The positive reactions to carrying out the tasks demonstrate that there can be great enjoyment in investing energy into creative tasks. The somewhat negative stereotype of students as unwilling to move away from more passive ways of working (sometimes held by students themselves) is, I believe, undermined by the results of this case study which demonstrates that the participants overwhelmingly welcomed the opportunities to work more actively and creatively.

5.2.5 Insecurity and Scepticism Reframed as 'Productive Discomfort and Constraints'

Some of the concerns expressed above may seem to suggest pitfalls of employing the creative tasks, but, as can be seen in comments that follow, the same students were enthusiastic about having participated in the activity. Indeed, it is possible to reframe the insecurity and scepticism that some students initially felt as 'productive discomfort and constraints'. Participants' descriptions of their initial feelings may reflect what scholars have identified as a disorientation that can prove, under the right circumstances (e.g. level of challenge), effective in helping students to think differently and generate new ideas. For example, DiYanni claims that we need to be jolted out of habitual ways of working in order to think "along fresh paths" and acknowledges that these jolts can feel painful (DiYanni, 2016: 148). In addition, James and Brookfield (2014) acknowledge that asking students to approach learning in unfamiliar ways can be threatening and confusing, but maintain that learning is enhanced and more memorable when students work through "moments of productive discomfort" (James and Brookfield, 2014: 7).

All in all, students acknowledged that their initial worries had been dispelled by engaging in the activities. For example, Jessica's concern that she was too unfamiliar with the topic proved unfounded:

> *I knew you were going to say 'no' [when I asked if I could look for inspiration on my phone]. If I had looked for definitions of intercultural competency, I would have found a way in for myself, probably. But when you said 'no', I thought, 'okay, I'm just going to take my time and think about it'. And it worked fine.* (Jessica, IP2: 1)

She was also pleasantly surprised that initial concerns about necessary artistic ability were dispelled:

> *I'm pretty pleased, actually. And I wouldn't have thought [so] in the beginning. I'm not really good at art anyway and then I thought, 'oh my God, they can draw and do really crazy things. I just can't do that'.* (Jessica, IP2: 4)

Martin, voicing reservations about engaging in unfamiliar, artistic tasks, also admitted that the results of such tasks can be a positive surprise:

> *Maybe sometimes I need convincing in terms of new, creative ways, but I would say that, all in all, ... Sometimes I think 'uugh' and then it turns out to be very good.* (Martin, IP1: 16)

These comments illustrate how initial concerns about the collage activity were dispelled and participants generally valued the opportunity to work creatively and to be more active in class and Lena was not alone in considering the class in which the collage was created “my favourite lesson this semester” (Lena, portfolio entry). Anne's acknowledgement that producing and expressing one's own concepts in these ways is “more work” appears to demonstrate that this form of student engagement should not be considered less of a challenge than

more traditional forms of learning simply because it is simultaneously characterised by several students as “fun”.

There seem to be two ways of viewing the issue of time constraints and the requirement to be creative 'on the spot'. On the one hand, it could be argued that time constraints impose necessary limits on creative activity in these cases and perhaps contribute to an atmosphere of “helpful creative panic” (James and Brookfield, 2014: 10). On the other hand, these students' comments could highlight how the rigid timetabling we work within can act as a barrier to satisfying creative expression (Carlile and Jordan, 2012). It seems likely that these two interpretations can exist simultaneously. In the event, all three students who expressed initial concerns concerning time constraints indicated that they were relatively satisfied with the end products of their work. In addition, another participant, Elif, found that the time pressure proved helpful in focussing her attention in the individual collaging task:

> *If I had had more time, I might have lost myself in my thoughts. So, I had the pressure to actually do something, to come up with something. So that was nice – it was good.* (Elif, IP2: 2)

Since scheduling an open-ended creative session is unrealistic in this case, and acknowledging the advantage of time constraints for some, it is perhaps best to help students keep their expectations realistic regarding the 'standard' of the work they produce. Caroline, who stated that she loved “creating art”, took such a pragmatic approach:

> *I didn't feel too bad about it [...] not going to be great. It's just something to collect your ideas. […] I thought, “Okay, it will be alright if it looks sort of crappy, as long as I get the aspects in I want to have there.* (Caroline, IP2: 1)

Thus, instead of placing the focus on the quality of the tangible product, it is perhaps helpful to draw students' attention to the advantages of engaging in the discovery process of creative activity. In this case study though, none of the

participants expressed dissatisfaction with their work and only Lena suggested that her collage was unfinished.

In sum, the presence of constraints and discomfort in class may initially seem undesirable, but this case study supports other research that has shown that they may indeed be advantageous for learning and creativity. For example, Beghetto (2010) argues that encouraging students to take intellectual risks that involve uncertainty and potentially a feeling of vulnerability, can, in a supportive classroom, enhance self-confidence and student agency. This, in turn, is likely to have a positive impact on future motivation and engagement in tasks that feel 'risky'. In addition, James and Brookfield (2014) also argue that working through such uncomfortable feelings can enhance creativity. Nevertheless, it is easy to imagine that students may suffer if they take risks that don't pay off, even in a supportive classroom. Given that the 'risky' nature of participation in these creative tasks emerges clearly from the students' comments above, it seems particularly important that tasks are designed to allow all students to participate and that 'mistakes' or 'failure' are explicitly positioned as part of the learning process.

5.2.6 Freedom, Autonomy and Full Participation in Personally Meaningful Learning

The personal nature of the arts-inspired tasks was specifically highlighted as significant by approximately half the research participants. For example, comparing the group poster task to more usual modes of academic work, Laura commented that she felt students had “the chance to put [their] personality into the task somehow” (Laura, IP1: 2). Louise also felt that the artistic tasks did not require talent but instead necessitated “getting your personality and your thoughts into something you do” (Louise, IP1: 2).

Esther pointed out that creative tasks can yield very different results from conventional text-based assignments, and connected this to the personal nature of working creatively:

> *I think that through creative stuff you can express much more, or different things than through text stuff. And I think when you do something creative about intercultural competence, you're thinking in a totally different way than when writing a text about intercultural competence. So, I think that doing creative stuff makes you look at it in a different way, or makes you think about it in a more personal way. Creative stuff is always personal because you're putting yourself into it.* (Esther, IP2, pp.20-21)

James and Brookfield (2014) identify personally meaningful learning as one of three pedagogical axioms for student engagement, and artistic ways of working seem well-suited to allowing students to explore their own "interior landscape" (Eisner, 2002: 11). Although each creative task had a goal that was clearly relevant to the field of IC, students were in most cases reliant on their own personal experience, beliefs and world view in order to complete the task. In this way, the creative tasks can be seen as enabling self-expression and as providing the opportunity to explore and question gut feelings and tacit knowledge. Introducing unfamiliar ways of working that draw on the personal has been demonstrated to foster the development of new directions of thought (e.g. Simmons and Daley, 2013), and artistic ways of working that encourage self-expression as an element of critical reflection seem to hold a great deal of potential for engaging students as ideas generated and connections made are almost unavoidably personally meaningful.

About a quarter of participants also commented that they appreciated the way the arts-inspired tasks allowed them to work in their own ways and exercise choice. It was clear to students from the outset that they could express whatever they considered most relevant or significant, and they were all aware that the end products would not be formally assessed either on aesthetic grounds or with regard to the ideas they chose to express. Jessica said:

> *You didn't say, 'do it this way or that way' or 'you have to use pictures' or 'you have to use this or that'. Everyone could just choose what they felt like doing and that was so good. It was really important, I think.* (Jessica, IP2: 1)

Jessica appreciated how this choice allowed a diversity of outcomes, commenting that "it's so nice to see […] because we are so different" (IP2: 2). Both Yuwei and Laura spoke specifically about how they felt the collage task offered them the opportunity to work freely, in comparison to ways of working which demand they conform to convention:

> *I really like doing something like this; I don't have to be structured. I definitely feel much more free […] It's always good to be free.* (Yuwei, IP2: 2)

> *Usually you have to write your thoughts down so they fit the question or the task but being creative is much freer.* (Laura, IP1: 2)

This freedom of choice was sometimes associated with a lack of pressure, which Qinyang, for example, considered "a great thing" (IP1: 2). Louise expressed similar sentiments about the freedom and lack of pressure she associated with working in non-standard, creative ways. Her comments indicate how she felt that creative tasks fostered her learning in this respect:

> *When you're doing a paper, you have to know how to write; there's a specific way of doing things. Either you're good at it or you're bad at it. But when you're getting creative, it's not about being good or being bad, it's about how you're going to reflect everything you have in your mind. I think it's a better opportunity to learn while being creative than just writing something. And being without pressure, [worrying] about whether it is going to be good or bad, or will I have a good grade or something.* (Louise, IP1: 2)

Caroline also connected this lack of pressure to feelings of safety that reminded her of her primary school experience and appreciated the fact that creative tasks allowed for multitude of approaches and outcomes that would not be "judged or seen as wrong" (IP2: 6). Participant comments concerning the value

of freedom of approach are also supported by much of the literature on creativity, whether this be within or outside formal education. For example, although the creative process often involves overcoming struggle and investing energy and effort, engagement in creative tasks has been demonstrated to be at its most intense when there is no worry of failure (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). The creation of a non-judgemental space therefore emerged as important for allowing students to follow their own paths and develop their own ideas. Drawing on recent research in neuroscience, Willis (2006) argues that allowing students freedom of choice, thereby fostering the creation of personally relevant learning experiences, also increases the consolidation of relational memories. This research also confirms that relaxed, supportive learning environments help information to be processed by the brain, and that pleasurable learning activities stimulate memory centres and increase focus. The negative impact of stress has also been shown to extend to creative cognition: while stress has been demonstrated to increase inhibition, disinhibition has been shown to enhance an individual's capacity to think along new paths and make new connections, which can be considered key indicators of creative activity (Carlile and Jordan, 2012).

In HE, James and Brookfield (2014) identify student freedom as essential for developing reflective thinking, while noting that this has implications for the assessment of learning. Building flexibility into evaluation is problematic: in an environment that requires learning to be made measurable, learning objectives need to be highly specific in order to determine whether they are achieved. In contrast, artistic tasks give students a great degree of freedom to generate, as Jessica pointed out, diverse and personalised outcomes. Divergent thinking is generally valued as part of the process of exploration and improvisation, while specific, pre-determined learning objectives treat learning as uniform and predictable and may well inhibit creative responses (Eisner, 2002). Moreover, the “pressure” to conform to standardised ways of working and thinking, mentioned in the comments above, can be considered a stress factor, which has been demonstrated to inhibit learning.

Furthermore, research into the links between creativity and motivation have demonstrated that it is important for creativity that motivation is intrinsic

rather than extrinsic in the form of, for example, positive external assessment. Hennessey (2010: 346) maintains that intrinsic motivation allows people to become "immersed in the problem itself, to suspend judgement, to experiment with alternative pathways, and to direct attention toward the seemingly incidental aspects of the task". In contrast, promised rewards or evaluations have been shown to inhibit this exploration as these tend to encourage individuals to opt for a less risky mode of working (ibid.). So, although clear goals were found to foster motivation and engagement in some students, the freedom to choose how to reach these goals and the lack of external judgement also emerged as valuable aspects of the creative tasks.

Because the creative tasks offered freedom in approach and allowed students to make a personal contribution, students such as Lena, Caroline and Ronja considered them open and accessible to all. Of the individual collage task, Lena said:

> *What I also found good about the class is that [...] everybody was kind of involved and could express themselves, or had to express themselves. And I think this was really good about the class: everyone was involved.* (Lena, IP2: 2)

Sarah, Mai, Alex and Ronja also commented on increased participation in the group poster task, with every group member "doing their bit of stuff" to advance the work (Mai, IP1: 12):

> *I think that's the advantage when you have to do this poster, for example: everyone participates. When you just have a discussion in your group, if two people already said something and you don't have anything to add or you just agree, then you just keep quiet and don't say anything.* (Alex, IP1: 13)

> *It's a good task to do because everyone can say something, or everyone can do something, and everyone has opinions and so on*

> *about this topic, so no-one can say, 'I don't know, I don't have an opinion'.* (Ronja, IP1: 5)

Going slightly further, Caroline credited full class engagement in the collaging task with changing the class space, thereby allowing her to see things from new perspectives:

> *Honestly, for me the important thing about the collage wasn't the aesthetic thing, but more like the atmosphere that was created by this kind of 'doing something with your hands and everybody is busy'. It creates such a different atmosphere than if we have a class discussion or the teacher is teaching at the front. And that makes you think of some stuff from a different angle.* (Caroline, IP2: 2)

The atmosphere of embodied 'busyness' as students went about the tasks perhaps also constitutes a disruption to normal class protocol that might jolt students into different ways of thinking, as Caroline suggests here.

All in all, the participants' comments in interview demonstrate that they found that carrying out the creative tasks an engaging activity. The tasks seem to have the potential to foster personalised learning that is therefore relevant to all students in unique ways, and many participants welcomed the opportunity to work in unfamiliar and embodied artistic modes. About half the participants experienced some unease or scepticism on being given the collaging task in particular, but concerns were generally proven unfounded and the initial discomfort of being faced with open, creative tasks can be productive if it allows students to break with familiar ways of thinking and learning (James and Brookfield, 2014). While the most significant features for motivation and engagement that emerged in interview have been teased apart here for examination, these aspects came together to engage individual students in differing ways and to differing degrees, with no two students making the same connections between these elements. Almost all participants indicated that participation in the creative tasks had increased their engagement, however

they chose to account for it. In the following section, the role of the creative process for learning is considered in detail.

5.3 The Creative Process for Creative Thinking

Having considered the ways in which the tasks were seen to encourage motivation and engagement, I now turn to an analysis of the role of the creative process in contributing to learning. On one hand, the creative tasks could be said to function as pre-reading or activation tasks, surfacing existing knowledge on the themes of culture and intercultural competence. On the other hand though, the creative tasks seem to have represented a particularly pleasurable and effective way of generating personalised knowledge, beyond mere reactivation of information, which "automatically gets you to a stage of learning because you are already working on it" (Sarah, IP1: 14).

This section has six subsections, each dealing with an individual subtheme that emerged from the data, as listed in Table 5.1. Section 5.3.1 concerns the generative potential of the creative process, while section 5.3.2 details how the collage images provided in the second (individual collaging) task proved particularly valuable for inspiration and structure. Section 5.3.3 explains how preconceived conceptions of 'intercultural competence' were shown to inhibit creative thinking for three students when creating their collages, and section 5.3.4 explores the extent to which students felt able to move beyond text-based approaches in working creatively. Section 5.3.5 details how some students became absorbed in the creative process, and section 5.3.6 shows how students felt that working in creative ways constituted learning that is more memorable.

5.3.1 The Generation of Ideas in the Creative Process

The potential of creative tasks for learning may lie in their ability to go beyond enabling students to reactivate existing knowledge. Almost all participants seemed able to tap into their experience and generate original ideas and connections both as part of a group and individually. For example, reflecting on her contribution to her group's 'culture poster', Klara said:

> *I came up with some things I wouldn't have thought I would think of. I surprised myself a couple of times.* (Klara, IP1: 1)

Klara's reflections arguably exemplify how students' artistic creations can be viewed as the means for generating ideas and meaning rather than the direct expression of prior experience or knowledge (Kraehe and Brown, 2011). Sarah was able to describe how this functioned when her group worked together on producing the 'culture' poster. The group started working on the task with “no real planning” and their concept of culture emerged “through working on it” (Sarah, IP1: 1). The following comments offer an example of this “collaborative emergence” (Sawyer, 2007):

> *I realised [the significance of the process] while working because I remember when Anne drew the little people around the structure and then Alex joined her and drew the other way round and his were really messy looking people. But then, I realised that actually it just showed what we had been talking about before, because not everybody is the same. And then, at the point where they met there did not seem to be enough room for a last person to fit in. […] I think that's part of what culture actually is: nobody is the same and in between someone has to be squeezed in.* (Sarah, IP1: 5)

Sarah's description of the group's working processes reveals how serendipitous 'mistakes' and unplanned, emergent features of the poster resulting from the collaborative group process were harnessed to form new understandings about features of culture. Louise also stated that “[w]hile working, more and more ideas came and completely new facets of culture came to our minds”(Louise, portfolio entry) while Alex noticed that carrying out the task led his group to realise that their initial cultural categories over-simplified matters and required more thought (Alex, IP1: 7). Marie also expressed how initiating creative work allowed her group to overcome a kind of intellectual paralysis and work towards a conception that they were satisfied with:

> *In the beginning, nobody had an idea what to do and then we just started to cut things and then it somehow changed, through doing something we kind of did something that actually was about the topic. It was really interesting, because in the beginning, we had like no idea and just did something, but we didn't actually know what to do. Our first idea was to leave the poster blank but then we started, for fun actually, just cutting things and suddenly we didn't have a blank space anymore.* (Marie, IP1: 7)

The value of the creative process for helping students reflect on and develop ideas was also highlighted in comments students made about the ways they worked in the individual collage task. For example, Elif said:

> *I thought it might be clever to first pick one thing that maybe to me would be a competence and then, quite late actually, I started to really have an idea and then to build things up.* (Elif, IP2: 2)

The spontaneous, organic way in which ideas were generated and developed in the creative process also became clear in other participant interviews. Ronja explained how her collage was formed as ideas built upon one another "snowball system-like" (Ronja, IP2: 1), while Yuwei worked with no clear idea about what she wanted to express: "when something came into my mind, I just put it there, kind of casually" (Yuwei, IP2: 2). Elif noted how her collage morphed into something she hadn't intended as she was working, only really taking a turn for the personal towards the end of the time allocated:

> *I mean, it turned out to be very personal. I didn't intend it to be like that. [...] It just developed quite late, actually. I think it was the last fifteen minutes when I started gluing everything and writing the text. But I like it.* (Elif, IP2: 21)

Although she doesn't specifically say it, it seems likely that Elif would not have been able to reach this point without working through the collaging process and thinking through her ideas in the time before gluing and making permanent the elements of her collage.

The way in which Sarah talked about the cognitive process involved in building up the elements of her collage perhaps demonstrates particularly well how ideas could be developed in the process of creation:

> *I started by looking at the pictures and then just […] and then I realised […]. And on the other hand, I realised […], and I realised, that actually, […]. And then I realised […] and then that actually made a lot of sense to me because I realised […].* (Sarah, IP2: 16)

The comments above would seem to demonstrate how these students found artistic ways of working particularly effective for the gradual generation and development of ideas and concepts where a vision develops as part of the creative process rather than existing beforehand and worked towards. They demonstrate how these ways of working encourage flexibility in thinking and an openness to change. They also demonstrate why it is important to pay attention to the creative, cognitive process in education, rather than taking the end product (here the collage or poster) as the only demonstration of learning. It has been claimed that the creative process can only be evaluated by means of the end product (e.g. Carlile and Jordan, 2012) but in the comments above it's possible to see that the creative process has great value for encouraging thinking and what Schön (1983) labelled “reflection-in-action”, regardless of what the finished collage or poster communicates, or even if it is completed.

Both creative tasks were open-ended and without pre-determined learning outcomes or specific criteria for assessment of the outcomes. This free exploration process seems to have had the potential to promote associative thought and generate ideas and insight. Simmons and Daley's (2013) investigations into using collage to stimulate scholarly work also revealed that engaging in arts-based activities supported meaning-making and cultivated ideas

in what they refer to as “the art of thinking”. An improvisational aspect to the creative process can also be identified in the participant comments above. Eisner, borrowing from Dewey (1938), refers to this side of intelligence, or cognition, as “flexible purposing”, and credits work in the Arts with fostering “the ability to shift direction, even to refine one's aims when better options emerge in the course of one's work” (Eisner, 2002: 77). Indeed, the open-ended nature of the collaging task allowed Elif to move beyond the original task and be led by the development of her own work to create an “inspirational image” that she hadn't at all intended to produce (Elif, IP2: 21). The creative tasks can therefore be viewed as a form of student inquiry in which the meanings students made from their “imaginative investigations” were not only collected together when they worked with the materials available, but also created as part of the artistic experience (Sullivan, 2005, xii).

5.3.2 Collage Images for Inspiration and Structure

A significant difference between the poster and collage tasks lies in the materials that were provided for each: while students were only given coloured paper for the poster task, images taken from magazines were provided for collaging (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.1 for details). The provision of these images proved instrumental in providing most participants with inspiration and/or structure for their work. For example, in the description of the development of her collage that Sarah gave (above), she mentioned that she used the magazine pictures available as the starting point for her collage. Approximately half the participants described how they had used the pictures as stimuli for reflection and the creation of ideas and connections. Ronja explained:

> *I think at first I just saw the word ['echo'] somewhere in the magazine pictures. I just thought it fits. At first, I didn't really think about what it means, but it's a word that I could connect somehow, because for me it means that you act in a specific way, and then the other person reacts to the way you have acted. […] To look at the pictures from all these magazines really made me think. I think it's a good idea to have some material to start with, not just thinking of*

possible things on your own. (Ronja, IP2: 3)

In other examples, Christophe stated that he started his collaging process with an image that "struck" him (IP2: 4), Lena found that one cartoon image inspired her whole collage, and Anne started with two images for opposing "sides" of her collage and "developed it from there" (IP2: 21). Katharina started the collaging process with her own ideas but found the magazine images helpful inspiration when she became unsure about how to progress and "no concrete idea what else to include" (IP2: 1).

Mai seemed to select pictures that were visually attractive, without worrying too much initially about what they would come to represent, "and then at some point it made sense" (IP2: 1).

Illustration 5.1: Mai's collage

For Xiu, the selection of images was perhaps even less conscious, and she seemed to feel confident in her ability to work with whatever materials she had:

I spontaneously picked up pictures, the things that were left on the table. I never thought about it. I just grabbed things and took them back to my desk. I took the most beautiful picture and thought that would make a good background. I noticed there was a person on one page, so I cut him out. Basically, I just used what I saw. (Xiu, IP2: 4)

Based on these comments it can be argued that the images provided served to promote fluid, flexible thinking and associative thought as students were able to connect their initial ideas to visual stimuli and push their thinking further, as part of the creative process. This perhaps demonstrates the potential of collaging tasks in particular. Some of the research into creativity has also demonstrated that while creativity requires freedom, it also requires limitations, and it can be argued that providing images serves both to stimulate thinking and to limit it. Lena's theory that she may have found the collage so enjoyable because she "just had the materials given", and "could only do something with them" (IP2: 6) would support this idea. Just as time constraints seemed to help some students focus on the task, constraints regarding resources perhaps stimulates the imagination and the development of ideas (DiYanni, 2016).

Illustration 5.2: Lena's collage

Working with the images available also seemed to help Katharina distil features that were personally significant:

> *It was a process. I had this idea to start with, but the pictures influenced my choices and my ideas and this curiosity aspect, which is very important for me, came up when I did this collage. […] I was inspired by all the pictures, so I liked that.* (Katharina, IP2: 2)

Katharina's remarks are reminiscent of the "conversational quality" that can exist between a developing artistic work and its creator (Eisner, 2002: 78). Inspired by the pictures and the development of the collage, Katharina was able to crystallise aspects that were personally significant, sometimes taking her lead from her work itself. Eisner (ibid) explains that the artistic work in progress also "speaks", and at times it is the artist who listens. Mai's comment that her collage at some point made sense to her (IP2: 1) also revealed that she was able to achieve an understanding of her own work in the process of creation, as Eisner (2002) proposes.

Katharina and Caroline also found the process of working with visual images helpful for sorting and structuring ideas. Katharina maintained that collaging "works, just to structure my thoughts in my mind" (IP2: 2), and Caroline expressed a similar idea, noting furthermore how the process of sorting and moving visual elements can aid the development of original ideas:

> *You have to put the things in different places on your collage and you have to decide on certain aspects because you cannot include all of them. But putting them in places, visually, you also kind of sort them out in your head. That was really interesting. […] Because you have to visualise it, you have to develop your own idea because you cannot just produce what your neighbour produces. So this was really helpful.* (Caroline, IP2: 2-3)

There seemed to be no single recipe for working with the collaging images, but this non-linear way of structuring ideas appeared to help students make connections, pay attention to relationships, and develop ideas. Participant comments revealed that, in developing their ideas, students were already making choices and judgements about the most pertinent elements and connections to include in the collage. These judgements were also made in the absence of external criteria. The point is often made that today's graduates need to make their way in a world characterised by ambiguity and uncertainty, and that flexible thinking and the ability to make judgements in the absence of rule is therefore extremely valuable in this climate (Eisner, 2002). The collaging task

appeared particularly effective in this respect as the visual images seemed to foster creative thought by acting as both a constraining factor and an inspiration.

5.3.3 Inhibiting Creative Thinking?: Collaging Preconceived Ideas

Nevertheless, the comments made by three students seem to demonstrate that working through the collaging process with the magazine images was considerably more valuable if students did not have a vision of what they intended to portray from the outset. For example, Martin had a clear idea of what he wanted to express in his collage before he started and felt limited by the pictures available:

> *I think it was hard to find the pictures that could suit my idea of intercultural competence. I had a clear concept and I searched for the right pictures. For me, what is available is what you get and the pictures influenced me because I only had a restricted choice of what I could show. For me the task of drawing a mind map would be better for developing ideas. […] Maybe my focus changed a bit, because I always thought more about language teaching and the intercultural speaker.* (Martin, IP2: 6-7)

Although Martin was open to trying out the creative tasks, he believed that he worked best in other ways that he described in interview as "real", and that involved, for example, problem-solving or ethnographic research. Working visually or metaphorically was not a way he would choose to approach his learning. In addition, in his collage Martin essentially attempted to reproduce Byram's (1997) Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence which he had encountered in a seminar on foreign language teaching led by another lecturer. These two factors meant that he seemed to derive little benefit from working creatively in this case. Indeed, his words indicate a sense of frustration that he didn't feel able to do this successfully with the resources available and, although he concedes that he was able to move away "a bit" from a preconceived

conception of intercultural competence, he did not seem to value this development.

Mai, who had chosen to work on a term paper on transcultural identity and multifacetedness in order to gain extra credit points for the class, also had a clear idea of what she wanted to express in her collage and did not seem to find the process particularly helpful for generating ideas. She also found it rather difficult to find suitable pictures at first:

> *It didn't help that I had already researched [the topic for a term paper] because I already had the theory about it and my thoughts about it. But maybe I expressed them visually.* (Mai, IP2: 5)

As in Martin's case, Mai's familiarity with closely connected theory seems to have inhibited the emergence of new or original ideas, supporting the hypothesis that previous knowledge can become entrenched and block novel thinking (Sternberg and Kaufman, 2010). In contrast to Martin though, Mai told me that she had chosen the IC course specifically because she was looking for courses in which she could work more creatively. Thus, she was perhaps better able or more willing to work metaphorically and ultimately found the task satisfying rather than frustrating. As she said,

> *I enjoyed doing it and putting it together; when my ideas came together. […] That was quite satisfying, actually.* (Mai, IP2: 5)

The third student who stated in interview that she had known what she wanted to do from the outset was Marie. She decided to work with the metaphor of 'Schubladendenken' which translates literally as 'drawer thinking' and is perhaps well captured by the English 'pigeon-holing'. Although Marie didn't state that the creative process had helped her generate new ideas, she was satisfied with her collage. In her case, she was able to work visually with the coloured paper alone and “didn't even look at the pictures” because she didn't feel she needed them (Marie, IP2:17).

Illustration 5.3: Marie's collage

Marie was one of only two students who didn't use the magazine pictures to create her collage and approached the task differently. Although Marie may not have found the process of creating the collage particularly revealing or generative because she had a clear idea of what she wanted to express from the outset, she, like Mai, benefited in other ways from the task, finding it a memorable activity that stimulated critical reflection, as discussed in the next chapter. Taken together though, these three cases appear to demonstrate that students were better able to develop ideas through the creative process if they did not hold fully developed opinions at the outset. It is worth noting that this was not an issue in the same way in the group poster task: representing a preconceived concept of 'culture' was in fact not possible since group members needed to work together towards a consensus.

5.3.4 Avoiding the Limitations of Language in Artistic Tasks?

Although many students included text in their collages, a quarter of participants indicated that working visually helped them circumvent language issues and express themselves differently. Connecting the visual work on her collage with the development of ideas, Ronja said,

I think it's a very good task for coming up with some ideas because I think it's good to work with pictures and letters because some things you might not [be able to] express in words. (Ronja, IP2: 1)

In her reflective portfolio Jessica noted how difficult she had found it to explain her collage to another student:

I was a bit at a loss for words, I did not know how to properly explain my message and even though [my partner] said she understood where I was coming from, I am not sure whether I was able to get my thoughts across properly. (Jessica, portfolio entry)

Sarah also noted that she was able to express more visually in her collage than she was able to explain in words:

It was hard to include examples, or put it into words, [but] I think that everybody can see the meaning, or see the associations. […] I wasn't even able to put two words on this [collage] but then, in the sharing part, I realised that it was not just hard to put words on the poster but kind of hard to explain it. (Sarah, IP2: 16-17)

Illustration 5.4: Sarah's collage

Of the group poster task, Sarah reflected on the group's use of colour and the way the poster itself communicated visually what is hard to explain:

> *With our poster, we connected the keywords and then we realised that we could not really structure them into main keywords and ones that go with them or underneath them. Actually, the colour and the way we arranged it kind of said what we thought about it because I wouldn't know how to explain that. [...] I think it's harder to explain than just to see it.* (Sarah, IP1: 2)

Also, with reference to the group poster, Xiu contrasted the way her group had worked together to harness visual elements with the way groups often find themselves communicating in a more conventional class discussion:

> *Most of the time students in university try to use words to express their feelings so I find this is really creative. […] It makes the class more colourful and when we just talk in groups it's often just two or three [people talking] and sometimes I get the feeling that words are not enough to express your feelings, to communicate […], sometimes I think language is limited and we need more creative ways, or different tools to communicate.* (Xiu, IP2: 2)

These comments support Leitch's (2006) findings that working in artistic modes can enable us to move beyond the limitations of language and allow us to access and communicate tacit, or embodied, knowledge in more holistic ways. Particularly where feelings are concerned, as Xiu indicates here, putting things into words can become an impossible task (Leitch, 2006). Since none of the participants was a native speaker of English but students were nevertheless usually communicating in English in class, difficulties in articulating not only emotions but rational, theoretical constructs can potentially be overcome in arts-based work. This would seem to highlight the potential of artistic ways of meaning-making and communicating for *all* students rather than only for those who may otherwise find themselves disadvantaged by usual academic ways of

working. Caroline also voiced this view in interview:

> *I think that this kind of alternative way of learning is just really a benefit to all the students, not only those who don't fit in the normal system of writing and word-connected learning.* (Caroline, IP2: 11)

However, not all students who carried out the collage task had limited themselves to the magazine pictures and I was surprised that so many had decided to include text on their collages. Most often, the text, or the labelling of collage elements, was explained as necessary for communicating the collage's meaning to others. For example, Sarah explained how she had felt the need to include some text on her collage in order to communicate a clear message:

> *I was thinking, 'okay, I'm doing this so that I bring across a message'. And then I thought, 'maybe I'm just doing this and nobody will understand'. Maybe it's because I'm used to doing a poster and then I will have to present it, or if I don't present it, it's just going to be put up somewhere and people will look at it. […] If I'd known that it was just for me, I wouldn't have even put 'cultural competence' on there. I would maybe just have put more of this web thing on there because I would have known what it's about.* (Sarah, IP2: 18)

It seems that Sarah would not have included text as part of her collage if she had not been considering how the collage would be understood by others. However, there were other explanations for the inclusion of text. Esther thought that she might have included text on her collage out of habit:

> *I didn't think that I had to put words on it... I think it's just that we're not doing creative work in our daily lives, and everything we have to do for uni is with words [...] I think it's just what we are used to.* (Esther, IP2: 3)

Anne, on the other hand, included text in order to bring structure to her

collage:

> *I think that even if I had been isolated from any influence, I still would have put quite a lot of words on my collage, because I think that's just the way that I structure my knowledge. Because I always need to be structured and have an overview at a glance.*
> (Anne, IP2: 20)

These comments seem to demonstrate that a variety of ways to approach collaging can be productive and that the tasks can accommodate personal learning preferences. However, for some students, habitual ways of working were not easy to suddenly throw off and my surprise at the inclusion of text on so many collages indicates a disparity between my vision of the task and the way some students envisaged it. I had forgotten that the similar-seeming poster tasks students encounter elsewhere in their studies generally encourage them to communicate a message to others in a clear and unambiguous fashion. Although I would not want to discourage students from including text in artistic work if they so wish, it is possible that some collages may have been conceived differently if I had explicitly stated that they only needed to be 'understood' by the creator. In general, however, the data would seem to indicate that working with images offered the opportunity to bypass language constraints should students wish. This allowed the development of non-linear thinking and the possibility of generating an original and personally meaningful range of connections, as the three examples of collage work examined in detail in the following chapter demonstrate.

5.3.5 Engagement in the Creative Process

When working on the creative tasks in class, almost all students in the class seemed to be engaged and absorbed in the task. This was particularly noticeable in the class in which the collages were created when students for the most part worked in silence. The atmosphere in the class in both cases was one of hard work and concentration, despite the ostensibly playful nature of collaging or making posters. Louise, for example, reflecting on the group poster task,

commented on how that class differed to others in the level of concentration she experienced:

> *When you start being creative and thinking about it, that's the only moment I don't look at the clock to see the time because when you're creative, you're just focussing on it and you just want to get the best out of it and you don't think about what time it is or what the others are doing. You're just focussing on your work.* (Louise, IP1: 1)

Christophe also seemed to suggest his absorption in the collage task when he declared that he had only had about half an hour to complete it when, in fact, students had been given an hour. Mai also commented that class members "were all very concentrated on what we were doing" in the collage task (Mai, IP2: 4), while Elif also indicated her absorption in this task when she said that she had not been aware of what was going on around her in class because "I was really too busy" (Elif, IP2: 2). These comments are reminiscent of what Csikszentmihalyi (1997) describes as 'flow' in the creative experience, whereby experienced time does not match clock time, as Christophe seemed to experience, and individuals are deeply involved in the activity at the expense of distractions. The ability of the creative tasks to engage students to the extent that a sense of timelessness could develop and distractions were excluded would seem conducive for deeper reflection on the subject matter and better thought-out concepts and ideas.

There seems to be no reason in principle why 'flow' can't occur in group projects too, but Elif commented that this absorption in the creative process had been lacking in the group work she participated in, partly as a result of the time pressure they had been under to complete their work:

> *We spent twenty minutes thinking about what we were going to do and we didn't really have time to change it afterwards. […] I liked the task but when you have to share your ideas with others and think about the ideas of other people in your group, you don't really have*

time to concentrate on what you are doing. (Elif, IP1: 9)

This comment potentially indicates the pitfall of detailed advance planning as opposed to allowing concepts to develop through the creative process, as other groups did. As shown in Section 5.3.3, the creative process seemed to hold more generative potential when students allowed the making process to inspire further ideas and interpretations, rather than work with a pre-developed concept.

5.3.6 Creative Tasks and Learning that 'Sticks'

About one third of participants also felt that the creative tasks were more memorable and would, or already had, increased the durability of their learning. In most cases, this was linked to the students' physical engagement in the task. For example, of the group poster task Sarah explained:

> *I think I could write more about what happened within the group and within myself while doing the poster than within the discussion. I think I can remember everything that we did practically: this stuff that we did, like cutting something out and arranging stuff is then linked to something that we have been talking about. Like concepts in our mind: which concept has to go where. So, it's basically two stages: I remember what we did and connected to that is the second stage […] where I remember why we put this concept there and the other one there. So, it's like the practical stage and then the mental stage, maybe?* (Sarah, IP1: 12)

Anne, Xiu, Esther and Marie also all connected active, physical participation in the creative activities with their memorability. The comments made by these participants are also backed up by current research into how the brain creates memories. As “what happens to the body happens to the brain”, hands-on, physical activities for learning have been shown to increase the sensory input into the brain and are therefore more likely to be recalled later (Jensen, 2005:

136).

Xiu and Katharina also spoke of the increased memorability of the tasks, but attributed this to the fact that the tasks were visual, rather than the fact that they had been physically engaged:

> *When you show me the models we made, I remember what it was all about, even after half a year. So, I remember what we did and how we got these ideas because I think the human brain doesn't always remember the idea but rather the colours and pictures.* (Xiu, IP2: 3)

> *I think this [collage] is easier to remember because my memory is visual – a picture comes to my mind and then I think about the food, and the network of people, and then I can remember what I connected with it.* (Katharina, IP2: 2)

Although the hypothesis of distinct learning styles has been contested as lacking an adequate evidence base, with some scholars labelling it a "neuromyth" (Newton, 2015: 1), research in learning psychology has confirmed that allowing students to create their own visual images constitutes an effective recall strategy (Jensen, 2005: 141).

For Ronja and Marie it was different again, with memorability linked to the fact that creative tasks necessitate thoughtful consideration and reflection on one's own opinions, or working out how best to express them:

> *I think it's much easier to remember these things because [creative tasks are] much more about one's own opinion, or one's own reflections.* (Ronja, IP2: 1)

> *I'm quite confident I will remember this stuff because I know I did something where I kind of had to think a lot about how I could*

express myself. I think that helped me a lot. It's like one of the things that are stamped into your brain. (Marie, IP2: 23)

The theories these participants expressed are again supported by literature that examines creativity in learning. For example, James and Brookfield point out that learning seems to be most durable when a variety of different teaching modalities have been employed and student engagement is therefore higher, implying that increased engagement in learning increases its durability rather than simply the physical nature of the tasks themselves (James and Brookfield, 2014: 8-9). However they chose to account for it, it seems that creative tasks such as collaging and making group posters were felt to be particularly memorable by these participants. Whilst some attributed this to the hands-on nature of the task, or their visual memory, personal engagement and investment in the tasks nevertheless emerged as a significant reason for their perceived memorability.

5.4 Summary of Chapter 5

This chapter has explored some of the significant dimensions of working in creative, artistic ways that emerged in the interview data, student portfolios and my own researcher diary. The full list of these themes was presented in Table 5.1 and this chapter focussed on presenting the first two main themes, namely the ways in which the creative tasks engaged students in pleasurable yet challenging learning, and the role of the creative process for learning. These two themes appear related, with motivation and enjoyment linked to engagement in the creative process itself. Around half the participants indicated that they welcomed the break from more usual ways of working, while several specifically appreciated the opportunity to work creatively with their hands. For many though, the individual collaging task was at first unsettling and many students reported initially feeling overwhelmed. However, in nearly all cases, concerns about lack of knowledge, artistic ability or time pressure were proven unfounded and in fact it can be argued that this initial disorientation can be helpful in jolting students out of usual ways of thinking.

The participants in this study also indicated that the creative process itself was important for learning. Over half the participants spoke about how ideas were generated through the creative process and, whether it was group or individual work, the creative tasks emerged as particularly well-suited for helping students surface ideas and make connections. The tasks seemed to foster a more intensive form of thinking, or reflection, not only stabilising slippery ideas (Eisner, 2002) but also generating them. In the case of the individual collaging task, the images provided served as stimuli for thinking for many, and both tasks provided non-linear ways of structuring thought and demonstrating connections. For some participants, the more artistic, non-linguistic ways of working allowed them to express ideas that would otherwise remain unexplored, while others included text in their collages in order to better structure their thoughts or allow their work to communicate more clearly with others. However, the inclusion of text in the arts-based work may have principally reflected usual ways of working rather than been advantageous in some cases, as labelling elements arguably forecloses further experimentation. It also emerged that previous knowledge of the concepts under exploration may block the emergence of new, original ideas in the process of individual collaging, while advance planning in the group poster task also appeared to hamper the spontaneous development of ideas.

Although the creative process emerged as significant in a variety of ways, around a quarter of the participants also indicated that working towards a clear goal in the form of a tangible creative product was motivating. The tasks were also seen as inherently memorable by many students, and indeed in interview none of the participants seemed to have any difficulty recalling what they had done, despite some interviews being carried out many weeks or even months after the tasks had been completed. Some students put this memorability down to the physical nature of the tasks, some to the fact that they were visual, and some to fact that the creative process had generated a great deal of personal investment: all three explanations are likely valid. The open and non-judgemental nature of working in creative, arts-based ways also emerged as contributing to intrinsic motivation, with several students stating that they appreciated the chance to

approach the task exactly as they chose rather than having to fulfil specific criteria.

The following chapter builds on the analysis presented in this chapter to examine the extent to which engaging in arts-inspired, creative tasks can be beneficial specifically for CICP, taking into consideration the diversity of the ideas generated and the potential of the tasks for fostering reflection and constructive thinking, as well as the relational aspects of both working on the tasks in groups and sharing individual work.

I N T E R L U D E

The Students Work on their Collages

It's 14:35 on Friday 29th January 2016. My students are working on creating their collages on the subject of 'intercultural competence'. Most of them are well underway now, busy cutting and positioning. They don't seem to be working quickly, rather taking their time. Now and again, students get up and wander back over to the tables where the magazine images are spread out. When he comes past me, Ben makes a joke about how I shouldn't have pulled apart the current edition of *Triathlon* as it's so expensive. I wonder if he thinks it's wasted on this activity. After the rush to get down to class on time with all the materials, and the adrenaline and anxiety I felt at letting the students loose with my research activity, I'm not sure what to do with myself. Everyone seems to be getting on fine. It's very quiet and atmosphere is starting to remind me of an examination room. Jens says, "It feels like a factory in here", and I think I know what he's getting at: the desks, as usual, are tied together in rows and the students are industrious, with their heads bowed. Suddenly, I'm transported back to a Wedgwood factory tour I took almost two decades ago, watching ladies hand-painting teacups at their workbenches.

I've not been 'circulating' as I don't want the students to feel as if they are being supervised and suddenly I notice that Xiu, over in the far corner of the room, isn't yet doing anything with the pictures she's taken. I'm immediately worried. For all that I try to resist falling back on national stereotypes that have repeatedly proven unhelpful, I can't stop myself wondering if she's not engaging with the task because she's Chinese and possibly more unfamiliar with creative ways and/or reluctant to communicate her dissatisfaction or confusion to me. I decide to leave her alone for the moment: if she doesn't want to do it, then she doesn't have to do it. And then she starts.

Towards the front of the room, Caroline looks up and catches my eye. She smiles a smile which I perceive as slightly ironic, and tells me, "It feels like I'm back in elementary school". I'm not sure what to make of this comment. We look at each other for a few moments and, after I've failed to read her mind and she hasn't expanded on her comment, I write it down and tell her that I'd really like her to explain her thoughts in a research interview at a later date. It's now 14:40. The students only have another half an hour left. I hope they all get finished, as far as something like this is ever finished. Is an hour enough?

I N T E R L U D E

Institutional Constraints and a Nomadic IC Course

Although I am afforded a great deal of freedom with regard to pedagogy, I cannot transform the conditions under which I work and the IC course has been subject to the same constraints and (changing) regulations as other classes in the department. For example, as a 'seminar', the course is open for up to 40 participants. Holding the class on Fridays at 2pm is one way to keep the number of students in the class (and related workload) manageable, but, with over 30 participants in the class, creating the sense of community that I feel would best enable intercultural learning is difficult. Asking students to work in the same small groups throughout the semester goes some way to remedy this, but sometimes students write on course feedback forms that they wish they'd had the opportunity to get to know more members of the class. I've yet to find a way to facilitate this within a 15-week semester without sacrificing the time students spend building the more intensive relationships in their small groups.

Changes in the design of the degree programme and the resulting modularisation of courses have also had an impact on the course. In Chapter 3 I have written about the ways in which the IC course developed from a language practice course with a Business English focus to the critically oriented IC course it became in winter semester 2015/16 and summer semester 2016. As the degree programmes were redesigned, the course was first moved out of language practice (*Sprachpraxis*) into a basic level (*Basismodul*) Cultural Studies module. Then, for summer semester 2015 it was moved out of the Cultural Studies module and became a course available only within an extension module (*Ergänzungsmodul*). Each shift necessitated a rethink of how learning would be assessed as different modules have different requirements. Each time the course moved, the changing circumstances benefited the course, but it's a measure of how my thinking has changed that, at the time, I considered the move into an *Ergänzungsmodul* a form of relegation. This was partly because it seemed to imply that IC had no legitimate place elsewhere in the degree programme of students of English, but mostly because in this new module the exam/portfolio could only be graded as pass/fail, which I thought did not encourage students to put much effort into the class.

As I began to align my teaching more with the principles of critical pedagogy, I came to regard the submission of an ungraded learning journal (the portfolio) as far better suited to the course because it brought learning processes and refection into

focus, and allowed for creativity, autonomy and individuality. After all, student diversity has only presented itself as a challenge rather than an asset when I have had to assess all students in ways that ensure comparability. Although my thinking has changed and the course had a more critical focus that did not involve student surveillance or standardised examinations, when I was carrying out my research I still worried that the course would not be 'taken seriously' by students. How could they be 'motivated' to attend regularly when they seemed to be getting the message that collecting credit points and grades count more than what is actually learnt in class, and to get these you don't even need to show up to class? When I first started in my position, I wished that all my courses could end in graded examinations so that students would take them (and I suppose, by extension, me) seriously, regardless of the intrinsic importance of what we were doing in class. Now, my concern is that in order for students to recognise the value of learning that allows for creativity, reflection, community and personal autonomy, they have to turn up and participate in the first place.

Whilst I sometimes felt frustration at having my course moved and attendant assessment practices regularly changed (and complicated by the different assessment requirements attached to different degree programmes), mostly I have been grateful for the autonomy I've had in designing, naming, and teaching the course. I truly have felt trusted in my professional judgement. Now, however, funding cuts have meant that there is no capacity for me to teach the course, and so it is no longer available at all. This semester the department is offering an advanced level course called 'Inter- and Transculturality in Anglophone Literatures' and that appears to be the only course dealing with similar themes. It seems a luxury now to have been worrying about which module the course is located in and changing attendance requirements and assessment modes when it now no longer exists.

Chapter 6 | Findings: Arts-Inspired Tasks for CICP

6.1 Introduction to Chapter 6

This chapter builds upon the findings presented in the previous chapter and shifts the focus to analysis that illuminates ways in which employing creative, arts-inspired tasks might be of value specifically for CICP. In the previous chapter it was shown that engaging in the poster and the collaging tasks encouraged student engagement and the generation of novel, personally meaningful ideas and concepts. This represents potential for learning for *any* pedagogy which values these features, and so this chapter seeks to take the analysis further and address the overarching research question:

- (How) is carrying out creative, arts-inspired tasks such as collaging and making posters valuable for learning in my Intercultural Communication course? (RQ1)

Thus, this chapter moves beyond an interpretation of the students' own assessments of the merits of participating in the tasks to identify the ways and the extent to which the tasks contributed to the achievement of my own pedagogical goals for the course, as outlined in Chapter 3. The development of a particular conception of intercultural competence was not a course aim since I did not wish to prescribe a model or list of attributes. However, in its experiential nature, the course did aim to foster:

- reflective and critical thinking
- open-minded attitudes
- an appreciation of diversity
- the ability to understand and take multiple perspectives.

Participation in the course may also have contributed to the development of other attributes that are, for example, listed as valuable for global citizenship (see, for example, Jackson, 2014) or are features of critical cosmopolitan thinking (see, for example, Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013), but this will have depended on the individual student. Although pedagogy did not prescribe a

certain way of thinking about IC or competence, an examination of student outcomes shows how developments in thinking and acting do correspond in many ways to existing frameworks. In this chapter I draw on scholarship in CICP in particular to analyse the potential of the artistic tasks to contribute to this pedagogy.

Whilst the previous chapter focussed principally on the significance of the creative process for student engagement and learning, this chapter examines the creative products themselves and the relational aspects of either working together to produce the poster or coming together in pairs to share the individual collages. As a result, and in contrast to the previous chapter, the group poster task and the individual collage task are dealt with separately. Data analysed and presented in the chapter is drawn primarily from the interview transcripts and supplemented by participants' artistic work and extracts from their course portfolios.

Three overarching themes from the second half of Table 5.1 are considered. The next section discusses how the creative 'products' can be seen to foster reflective thinking, both in themselves and in connection with the texts that students were asked to read subsequently. Section 6.3 examines the relational aspects of working together in groups to produce the group 'culture poster' while Section 6.4 deals with the advantages for CICP of encountering others' artistic work as a form of intercultural sharing. The chapter ends with a summary of the findings.

6.2 Creative 'Products' for Reflective and Constructive Thinking

This section presents a selection of the participants' work and considers how, and the extent to which, engaging in the creative tasks fosters reflective and constructive thinking, in line with the pedagogical goals outlined in section 3.5. The analysis of the participants' work that follows does not attempt to either assess aesthetic value or identify common themes emerging in the posters and collages since such evaluations were not aims of this study. Instead, it was considered more relevant to examine how the tasks were able to draw on the

students' unique understandings and life experiences, fostering reflective thinking skills and inquiring attitudes. Such outcomes also reflect the belief that students' identities and positionalities are also co-constructed within the classroom, which acts as a site for engaging with difference and alternative perspectives (Fassett and Warren, 2007). The following three subsections consider the ability of the group poster task to foster reflective thinking, the act of collaging for unique meaning-making, and participants' reflective engagement with scholarly texts subsequent to carrying out the artistic tasks.

6.2.1 The Group 'Culture' Posters: Fostering Reflective Thinking

As explained in Chapter 4, the task of creating a model or poster on the theme of 'culture' was given to students in the fourth week of the semester. Until then we had only been indirectly dealing with the term and the reading for the following week (in this case, Jackson, 2014) dealt with the concept of culture from a scholarly perspective. The students were asked to develop a poster, or model, to represent 'culture' and were provided with materials, but no guidance was provided with regard to creative approach or conceptual advice, apart from one group of students that looked as if they were struggling to get started after a long period of discussion. It can be argued that creating a poster about such highly complex and ambiguous theme is a difficult task, but it was viewed primarily as offering students a starting point from which they could generate ideas and connections for discussion rather than come to any definitive definition or conclusive artistic portrayal. Although some posters exhibited commonalities, the end results were very different with each poster exhibiting a distinctive 'signature' approach or unifying concept. The five culture posters that follow were labelled either by the students in class or in the research interviews in which they were discussed, and I provide brief descriptions based on participant explanations before critically reviewing the posters as a whole.

The SuperCulture Market

Illustration 6.1: The SuperCulture Market

This poster depicts how an individual can choose from many aspects of culture and create an individual cultural identity, where aspects of culture are viewed as resources for creating a personal cultural repertoire. It foregrounds the active role of an individual in creating and performing their own cultural identity and thereby locates culture firmly within specific individuals who have agency. This contrasts, for example, with a view of culture as an abstract, external, determining force that one is one is born into and must passively accept.

The Venn Diagram

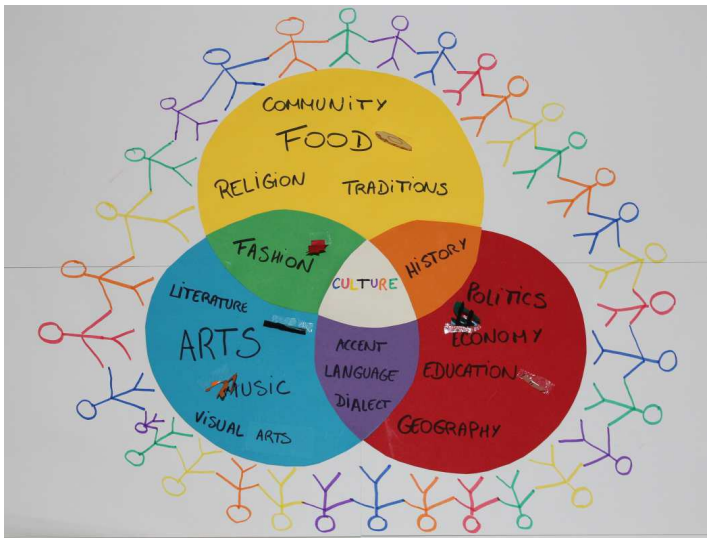

Illustration 6.2: The Venn Diagram

In this model group members tried to identify the major elements of culture and demonstrate that these are often not discrete items but are interdependent. As other groups also found, insight was generated in the process of making the model. For example, the stick people were drawn similarly but still look different as they were created by two different group members. This difference came to represent difference within cultures, while the smallest stick person came to represent someone who has to be "squeezed in" who may otherwise by excluded (Sarah, IP1: 5). 3D elements also came to represent a multi-dimensional view of culture.

Think Outside of the Box!

Illustration 6.3: Think Outside of the Box!

After identifying major aspects that make up "culture", this group worked with metaphors such as "thinking outside the box" and "breaking down walls" in an approach that demonstrates their awareness of the dangers of essentialism and encourages an open and questioning approach. Similar to the group who created the 'SuperCulture Market' poster, Marie's comments portray the idea that culture can be seen as residing in individuals:

> *Our group started with the 'classic' aspects of culture like art, food, religion, education and politics. All cultures have similarities and differences. To overcome prejudices and misunderstandings, everyone has to think 'outside the box' so a get-together of our individual*

cultures in peace and harmony can be achieved. Culture is not only hard to define, it even splits us up into different groups of people and distinctions can be made until every single one of us appears with an individual and personal culture at hand (Marie, portfolio entry)

The Culture Test

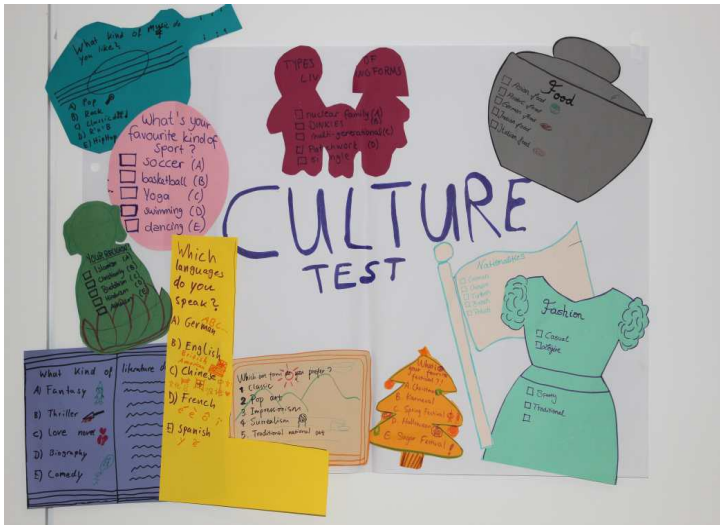

Illustration 6.4: The Culture Test

The group that created this poster began by working with metaphors that are often used to illustrate cultural hybridity such as the “melting pot” or “salad bowl” and intended to show that aspects of culture can both become hybrid and equally remain separate. Similar to the group that produced the ‘SuperCulture Market' poster, this group also gave agency to the individual in the ability to select preferred options from 'cultural categories' and create a personalised cultural identity.

The Culture Tree

Illustration 6.5: The Culture Tree

In this poster, culture has been compared to a tree in which history, language, geography, family and home make up the roots that an individual is born into, and broad contextual categories for the tree trunk, which provide nutrition to the fruit. With the regard to cultural “fruits”, the group decided to include some “negative aspects” that result from the way we live our culture, such as environmental damage and war.

Fostering Reflective Thinking

The posters seem to show how the task stimulated thinking about the concept of culture, and, as also shown in their comments and the findings presented in the previous chapter, demonstrate how working visually enabled them to create concepts and connections they may not otherwise have come up with. Due to the heterogeneity of the course members, it is not possible to say with certainty how far these concepts were novel to the individual students. However, at Week 4 of the course, when the group poster task was created, it is possible to say that most students had not previously critically engaged with the concept of culture, despite it being an integral part of the 'Bachelor English Studies' degree programme.

Although this case study does not attempt to assess the relative quality of the students' representations according to my own understandings of 'culture', the completed posters pictured above do reveal that students were stimulated to think carefully while they were working and it is interesting to note that although the resulting posters look very different, they do feature some commonalities. The 'SuperCulture Market' and 'Culture Tree' posters in particular demonstrate how students realised how many facets can be considered elements of culture, with the 'Think Outside the Box' and 'Culture Test' model aiming to show that each individual has their own cultural identity. The makers of the 'SuperCulture Market', 'Think Outside the Box' and 'Culture Test' posters also tried to express individual agency in selecting and creating culture, whilst the makers of the 'Venn Diagram' and 'Culture Tree' instead portrayed the connections between the different aspects of culture they had identified.

To examine the value of the task as part of the students' learning process in a course that was exploratory in nature, it is however perhaps more useful to draw on the participant comments about their posters as they reflected on their work. As was shown in the previous chapter, many participants found the creative process useful for generating ideas, and comments reveal that the completed poster also functioned to engage students in critical reflection on their own work. Martin, for example, who was part of the group that created the 'SuperCulture Market' poster, later reflected that he found that idea good but recognised weaknesses in this view. He wrote:

> *… there are many aspects of culture one cannot choose. Among those are nationality and history. In addition, the fact that culture is not a static concept and changes constantly is not displayed in our visualisation.* (Martin, portfolio entry)

His reflections show that he has realised that identity is not, as Hall and Werbner (2008: 347) put it, a “free-floating smorgasbord” and also that cultural identity itself is always in process.

The group that created the 'Culture Test' poster were generally not satisfied with the way that the poster represented their ideas. Ronja wrote in her portfolio that the group had considered it an important aim to show that there can never be one valid definition of culture, and it was generally felt that the poster hadn't manage to capture that message. As Yuwei (IP2: 1) said, “the original idea... what we wanted to show is good [...], but not the way we represented it”.

Jessica also later reflected that a different group's 'Venn diagram' poster “radiates harmony” and wondered whether the visual balance and aesthetic serves to blind us to any conflict caused by cultural difference (Jessica, portfolio entry). Comparing the Venn diagram model of culture that her own group created with the tree model, Louise commented:

> *We were in an 'everything is pretty and nice' mood, but the other group included the negative aspects of culture. I was really impressed by their work.* (Louise, portfolio entry)

Other students also critically examined their own thinking in the light of terrorist attacks in Paris of 13.11.15 that were carried out later on the same day that students created their posters. Xiu found it “very interesting” that her group had found it difficult to think of “negative aspects of culture” when they created their poster (Xiu, IP2: 1), and Alex wrote:

> *We were making these posters just hours before the terrorist attacks in Paris happened. I bet if we had done the posters after the attacks, nearly everyone would have thought about terrorism, being emotionally affected by an event like this. I think it is interesting to realize how so many people (including me) just fade out bad things in their minds if they are not concerning them directly, also chronologically speaking.* (Alex, portfolio entry)

Alex was able to critically reflect on his own thought processes and the way that emotionally disturbing events impact on the nature of his own concerns, and, as

a result, his work. From the perspective of critical pedagogy, developing this awareness can be considered part of an education in which students discover that their knowledge is created in a specific historical context, including their differing understandings of 'culture'. As the students found, there are no easy definitions, but the concepts that they created in visual form arguably stimulated further reflection on the complexities and role of culture in our lives. Creating visual representations of culture in culturally diverse groups can be considered both an accessible and a stimulating task: each individual can identify ways in which culture shapes their life and participate in the task, while the diversity in experience and viewpoints can stimulate original thinking and multidimensionality in the work produced, as shown in the previous chapter. It can also be seen from some participant comments that the completed posters encouraged students to reflect on their own work, identifying omissions in their thinking and potential issues with their approach. Creating such opportunities for critical reflection on one's own work can be considered essential for fostering reflective capacities and can advance students' thinking as part of CICP that encourages students to uncover and reassess their own assumptions.

6.2.2 The Individual 'Intercultural Competence' Collages: Collaging for Unique Meaning-Making

This section presents three examples of individual intercultural competence collages created in class by students who became research participants. The participants' own explanations of their collages, upon which my analysis draws, can be found in Appendix G and were crafted principally from data gained in interview but occasionally also supplemented by comments made in portfolio entries. These collages were selected partly because they represent diverse perspectives, but also because these students had been able and willing to explain their work in some detail in interview. As explained in the previous chapter, one of the benefits of surfacing ideas artistically is that some students were able to go beyond the limitations of their language, so it is unsurprising that not all participants were able to explain the resulting collages in detail.

Christophe's Collage

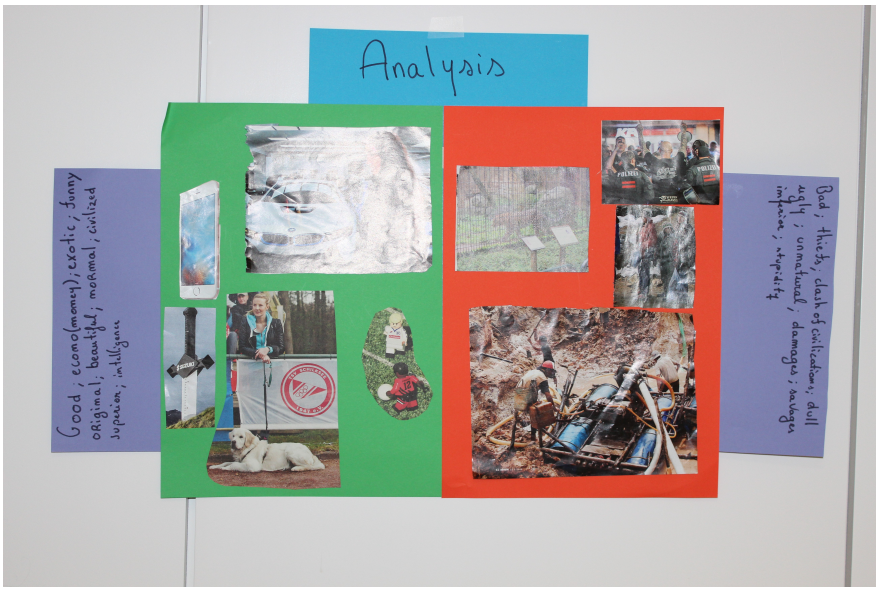

Illustration 6.6: Christophe's collage

In making his collage Christophe indicated that he drew on his own experience of living abroad and, in interview, also reflected on his friend's experience in Calais working with Syrian refugees, noting in particular how unjust his friend found the media narrative. His collage reminds us of the necessity to uncover our own assumptions about what is "right" and "normal" about the way we live and examine taken-for-granted ways of thinking about cultural others. He went beyond more commonplace notions of "effective" and "appropriate" intercultural communication and encourages us to analyse our own positionality and standpoint in order to recognise the injustice in some of our attitudes. The points he made are particularly reminiscent of "framing" and "positioning", which are two of Sorrells' (2013) capacities for an "intercultural praxis" that represents "a way of being in the world that joins critical, reflective, and engaged analysis with informed action for socially responsible action and global justice" (Sorrells, 2013: 231). "Framing" as a competence entails the recognition that our perspectives are always shaped by the contexts in which we operate, and that these "frames" advance certain interests that may also serve political ends. "Positioning", furthermore, involves understanding how we are positioned in relation to others, including along socially constructed categories of difference. Importantly, this requires a recognition of the material and symbolic consequences of different positions and the ways in which some people are

advantaged and others disadvantaged. As with Christophe's collage, “analysis” in “intercultural praxis” requires that we problematise views that are presented as “true” in the media and elsewhere (Sorrells, 2013).

Christophe's collage can also be seen as referencing ideas of global citizenship and cosmopolitanism. He highlighted a social injustice that he believes is inherent in Western attitudes and evidences a global consciousness that has been linked to notions of global citizenship (Jackson, 2014). In pointing out that we need to consider global economics in our intercultural analysis, Christophe echoed Appiah (2006), who maintains that cosmopolitan ways of being demand that we care about the reasons for global injustice rather than simply the effects.

Katharina's Collage

Illustration 6.7: Katharina's collage

In contrast to Christophe, who chose one key focus, Katharina represented a variety of aspects of intercultural competence in her collage and drew explicitly on her own and her father's intercultural experiences. By positioning a person in the centre of her collage, Katharina expressed that intercultural competence, however conceptualised, in practice concerns real interaction between particular individuals. The inclusion of food as a dimension of culture also highlights the embodied nature of intercultural encounters. Katharina's description of her father's concerns and experience highlighted the ways in

which popular misconceptions around food cultures can lead to inaccurate stereotypes, whilst also exemplifying fear of “culinary otherness” (Parasecoli, 2011: 654). In academic literature, intercultural competence is often framed as an intellectual capacity involving appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes, with little attention given to the fact that intercultural encounters often involve material, physical contact. Katharina's father's worries about having to eat “chicken feet or something” perhaps reflected his concerns about the wider foreign culture “where choices about ingestion interact both with the physiological facts of nutrition, the cultural aspects of signification and communication, and the social structures of production, distribution, and consumption” (ibid.: 647).

Katharina connected requisite attitudes and skills with activities that cultivate these, such as actively seeking out new and unfamiliar experiences. Katharina felt that her curiosity, open attitude towards others and courage went a long way to compensate for a natural shyness, and her identification of self-confidence as a competence seems particularly reflective. Self-confidence and self-esteem often remain hidden or taken for granted in models of intercultural competence, but, when encountering intercultural conflict or difference, these personal attributes may well place individuals in a better position to harness self-awareness and critical reflexivity for personal development and growth. Courage, in Katharina's explanation, became as important an attribute as curiosity in enabling her to face new, challenging and perhaps uncomfortable situations rather than choosing to avoid them and remain in her “comfort zone”. In this way, collaging has allowed Katharina to foreground her own, personally relevant conception of competence in intercultural situations rather than one dictated by the literature.

Furthermore, Katharina's collage shows how two people can often find a small, non-universal thing that they share and which connects them. Appiah (2006) describes this as one of the rewards of cosmopolitan curiosity since once two people have found something in common, this opens the door to the possibility of learning and discovering more from one another through further conversations (Appiah, 2006: 97). Katharina's point that we should also engage positively with

others when we see only difference also echoes contemporary conceptualisations of cosmopolitanism which regard difference as a source for learning, and diversity within communities as enriching. (Appiah, 2006; Delanty, 2009). Thus, Katharina's description of her collage demonstrates that she has been able to create personally meaningful understandings of intercultural competence that resonate with existing literature.

Xiu's Collage

Illustration 6.8: Xiu's collage

Xiu's collage again demonstrates how personal reflection has been harnessed in the creation of a unique and sophisticated conception of intercultural competence. Thus, drawing on her experience working on a small farm in France, Xiu explored the relevance of nature relatedness. The strength of an individual's bond with nature is not commonly brought into connection with notions of intercultural competence, but Xiu's ideas are not without precedence. In fact, research has shown that immersion in the natural world can not only be beneficial for personal well-being, but also encourages intrinsic values that orient an individual to a better connection and focus on others (Weinstein et al., 2009). This research builds on previous studies that have shown how connectedness with nature has been linked to behaviours that display relational emotions such as love and care, and relational mind-sets such as the ability to take different perspectives (ibid.: 1316). The results of their study suggest that

close contact with nature can foster greater authenticity, generosity and consideration of others (ibid.: 1328). These are capacities that have been included in conceptualisations of intercultural competence and global citizenship which place the focus on ethical relationships. Additionally, Buddhist educator and activist Daisaku Ikeda (2005: x) positions “the wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life” as one of three essential traits of global citizens. Thus, in drawing attention to the capacity of the natural world to foster human connectedness in her collage, Xiu has conceived an approach that contrasts with dominant, Western conceptualisations of intercultural competence.

Xiu's collage also expresses the importance of knowing both one's own and others' history and society. This is, in contrast, often stressed in the literature on intercultural competence. It features, for example, in Byram's highly influential (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence and can also be considered relevant for CICP: understanding that our identities have historical origins that inform where we and others feel we belong in society and cultural groups arguably facilitates reflection on our own cultural positioning (Toyosaki and Chuang, 2017). Xiu believed that understanding the historicity of our own and others' identities can lead to acceptance rather than conflict, exemplifying respect for different ways of living. This capacity is also found in the literature on critical cosmopolitanism (Appiah, 2006; Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013).

Xiu also indicated that she considered it important to know one's role or place in the world. This perhaps highlights the importance for global citizenship of security in one's own identity and an understanding of one's unique capacities as an individual. “Self-esteem” is listed as a requisite attribute for global citizenship (Jackson, 2014: 318) while critical conceptualisations of cosmopolitanism highlight the importance of remaining locally connected while becoming globally-minded.

Furthermore, Xiu positioned the ability to feel as a competence. Similarly, McIntosh (2005) believes that “capacities of heart” are essential for global citizenship, which she, like Xiu, conceptualises as having much to do with generosity of spirit and human connection. Writing from a feminist perspective,

McIntosh argues that, for example, global capacities include “the ability to balance being heartfelt with a felt knowledge of how culture is embedded in the hearts of ourselves and others” (McIntosh, 2005: 23). Furthermore, Xiu's comments about her need to learn how to “hang [her] feelings on letters” are also supported by academic research that has demonstrated that using a foreign language can create emotional distance (Hayakawa et al., 2017). This may be useful in some situations, but in Xiu's explanation it seems that it hinders her from communicating her feelings authentically. In sum, Xiu's view that the capacity to be open-hearted and connect with others on an emotional level should be considered an intercultural competence once again moves beyond some instrumental models of effective intercultural (communicative) competence. In interview, Xiu talked a great deal about what she had learned from her friends and their experiences, and the collaging process seems to have allowed her to reflect upon these and her own experiences to create work that expresses a personally meaningful conception of competence that blends aspects of Buddhist and feminist conceptualisations of global citizenship with those that are found more commonly in IC textbooks.

Collaging for Unique Meaning-Making

In presenting these examples, my intention has not been to compare or assess them in terms of themes, or indeed view them as indicative of the level of intercultural competence of their creators, although it can be argued that the knowledge generated in these three examples was sophisticated in approach. Rather, the wide variety of outcomes generated in working creatively on this task demonstrates that it has allowed these participants to draw on tacit knowledge and experience and given them the opportunity to express their own ideas in ways that constitute personally meaningful learning. Simons and Hicks (2006) have argued that art offers opportunities for personal expression and can therefore reconnect people with their own experiences and emotions, and Christophe, Katharina and Xiu have indeed drawn on their own experiences and positionalities in creating their collages. Christophe, like a number of other participants, linked intercultural competence to the particular and unique socio-historical context in which we were situated. This artistic linking of the abstract concept of competence with the social world in which we live shows that the

task has the potential to foster a student's self-awareness and a recognition that knowledge is situated in a specific political and social context.

In interview, Christophe was also able to reflect upon his own approach and the over-emphasis he felt he placed on presenting a good/bad dichotomy from an imagined Western perspective. He acknowledged that within the Western world there is not one single view, and that many aspects represented by his collage will not always be viewed as either “good” or “bad” by many, but instead as nuanced:

> *I split my collage on purpose, even though that's too simple. I wouldn't use colours again to show what's good or what's bad because, you know, once again, it could be totally different from one person to another and therefore it won't always be that relevant. Actually, I love to attempt a neutral point of view because you can clearly, clearly get it wrong just by saying, 'that's good and that's bad': that's what's going on in Europe, actually. And I've done it too! That's why I think that part sucks.* (Christophe, IP2: 5-6)

Such critical reflection, as another dimension of both “intercultural praxis” (Sorrells and Nakagawa, 2008; Sorrells, 2013) and critical cosmopolitanism (Sobré-Denton, 2012), can be fostered if students are encouraged to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their own ideas, making considered judgements despite the absence of external criteria for assessment.

In all cases, the participants' responses show how working on the collages can contribute to a critical pedagogy in which the personal experiences of students constitute the starting part for learning. The examples presented also show that students were able to go produce reflective, thought-provoking and personalised notions of intercultural competence. Kraehe and Brown (2011) argue that arts-based inquiries foster self-confidence and agency by allowing students to craft their own original responses, and these are key capacities that CP aims to support (Giroux, 2011; Darder et al., 2017). The ideas these three participants were able to express in their collages therefore show that the inclusion of these

tasks in my course helped achieve my own goals for learning, and some students also reflected on the value of such tasks for reflection and the development of one's own position:

> *It takes time [to create a collage] and it's not guaranteed that it will help everyone. But actually, with subjects or topics like this it helps to reflect, because that's how we develop, right? That's how we change as people.* (Jessica, IP2: 1)

> *I liked the task because I hadn't really engaged with the topic before. So, after the task, I knew more about myself, what my position is, I think. So, in that kind of way it helped me to express my opinion, I think.* (Anne, IP2: 22)

Although the collage tasks can be argued to foster reflection as students mine their own and others' experience to create their own unique conceptualisations of intercultural competence, it seems that the tasks best allowed students to develop a position rather than, for example, critically check the assumptions that inform their opinions. However, in order to critically reflect on one's own theories, it is necessary to first surface and express them.

6.2.3 Reflective Engagement with Scholarly Texts

In a previous semester, I had asked students to draw pictures or make models in reaction to texts that I had given them as class preparation, with the aim of encouraging them to select the aspects they found most personally significant. As outlined in Chapter 4, in this case study I decided to approach the task differently, exploring the potential of using the arts-inspired tasks in advance of the course reading, not only to enable the generation of novel ideas as part of the creative process, as discussed in section 2.4.3, but perhaps also to encourage students to take a more critical stance when reading and actively reflect on the connections to their own work. As Louise noticed, the arts-inspired tasks functioned as an effective pre-reading activity:

> *If you do the [creative] project first it's like a preparation for what you are going to read after and you're going to be prepared for the text more.* (Louise, IP1: 6)

Beyond this advantage, the analysis below shows that working on artistic tasks in advance of reading had the potential to help students draw reflective comparisons between their own approaches and those presented in the literature, avoid unconditional acceptance of scholarly positions, and integrate their personal knowledge with academic theory in order to better develop their own positions and understand other perspectives.

Firstly, several students compared their collages on intercultural competence with the reading (Jackson, 2014) outlining scholarly conceptions. Written reflections in student portfolios provided evidence of this and it was also discussed in research interviews. Caroline described how the task helped students create "some sort of concept in our head" that they could use as a starting point for evaluating ideas presented in the text (Caroline, IP2: 3). Both Sarah and Caroline demonstrated in interview that they were able to compare their own ideas to those in the text and reflect on the implications of the differences:

> *After doing this [creative task] I had my own concept in my head [...] I kind of read the text [...] from the perspective of my collage. And on the one hand, my perspective was confirmed, or even taken further. And on the other hand, so many different aspects were introduced […] and I realised that so much is not captured by my collage. But I thought they could easily be attached.* (Sarah, IP2: 20)

> *The text was sort of different […]. I remember a list and that would fit well to certain things [expressed in my collage]. But the theory I liked the most was this kind of theory that [intercultural*

> *competence] needs to be developed, like it's a process thing which cannot be put in terms of achieving a certain kind of knowledge or skill. And I like that most and this was not quite represented in my own collage.* (Caroline, IP2: 3)

Here, both students are able to critically reflect and exercise judgement on the quality of their own work and identify elements of scholarly work that most complement or extend their own approach. Thus, in selecting and harnessing theory from the text to extend their own ideas, these students evidence what Thayer-Bacon (1995; 2000) conceives as "constructive thinking" that respects personal, subjective knowledge and integrates this with expert knowledge to grow ideas.

In interview, Marie compared not only the ideas put forward but also the modes of expression used in her collage and the text:

> *The text was more about the competencies themselves. I felt that the text included all the ideas I had, but it is more explicit in the words that are used and what intercultural competence consists of. And I'm like, 'okay, but let's try to connect them all and figure out what's behind it.' I think that I was more on the emotional side and the text was very scientific. I still like my approach: I would still do it exactly the same way because I think the text was really closed.* (Marie, IP2: 18-19)

Here Marie revealed not only an awareness of the difference in her own ideas and those expressed in the text, but also how artistic ways of working have allowed her to access her own emotions and experiences, in contrast to much scholarly writing that presents knowledge as objective or "scientific". Her attempts to harness emotions to make connections and "figure out what's behind it" bring to mind Eisner's claim that engaging in artistic processes is a form of qualitative inquiry which requires feeling and engages sensibility (Eisner, 2002: 232). Marie's assertion that she still has confidence in her own "emotional"

approach in spite of the text also perhaps suggests that the collaging activity may have a part to play in helping students recognise the validity of attending to their own feelings and personal voice in the process of learning and understanding (Thayer-Bacon, 1995).

In describing their engagement with the subsequent text, some students themselves explicitly pointed out how they were sometimes liable to accept whatever is written in a scholarly text, rather than engage with it critically. For example, Sarah said:

> *When I read the text, I was trying to fit all the theories from the text into our model […] Sometimes I think that if you get the theoretical input first, then you just kind of forget about the things that you've known before […] I think for students it's sometimes like, 'okay, there's a person who seems to be really important and he said this and this', and then they maybe take that for granted and are like, 'okay, this has to be the truth and this is the way I'm thinking now'. But sometimes you can kind of disagree with definitions and theory.* (Sarah, IP1: 7-8)

Martin also noted that working in artistic ways in advance of reading a scholarly text on the same theme helped avoid a reliance on "one concept dictated by the text that you consider academically useful" (Martin, IP1: 9). Ronja and Anne also shared this opinion, but Anne also associated the development of increased criticality towards the text with the degree of effort that students had invested in their own creative work before engaging with the text:

> *I think that's not a topic where you can say, 'okay, that's right or wrong'. So, by first of all coming up with your own opinion and then reading the text I think you're thinking more critically about the topic and also coming up with your own arguments. I think you're just putting more effort into the learning process and that's what helps you get further than just reading the text and then maybe just*

> *simply agreeing with the arguments that are presented in the text.* (Anne, IP2: 22-23)

Again, these comments support Thayer-Bacon's (1995) claim that integrating personal knowledge with expert input can enable students to "get further", as Anne puts it, and come to more sophisticated and relevant understandings. The creative process, which was shown in the previous chapter to have significant potential for fostering the generation of personally meaningful ideas, resulted in a unique 'product' that could then be integrated with the given text by means of reflection and critical thinking to produce new knowledge and solutions.

Marie's comments indicate the degree to which she critically engaged in the text after collaging her own idea of intercultural competence:

> *I was like 'okay, so these are the competences and now it's proven that they are the competences and we have to stick to them?' […] How can we choose what is important and not important? Because for everyone it's something different. […] Usually, you read a text, then you make some notes, and then you're like, 'okay, this was the text and it's like that.' You just accept it. I think that [the collage] helped me a lot to say, 'well, it's not enough to say okay, those are the competences and it's just like that.'* (Marie, IP2: 7)

In Marie's case the creation of the collage and her subsequent reflection on both her own approach and the ideas expressed in the text seem to have fostered confidence in her own ideas and intuition. Although critical of the text, Marie also found the scholarly input important not only for reflecting on her own approach to the collage, as shown above, but also for understanding the different approach taken by another student:

> *I think it was important that we had to read the text afterwards, too. Reading the text afterwards helped me think more about the difference between my approach and my partner's. Because I worked*

> *with one metaphor and just stuck to this one theme and she was more like thinking about the whole thing. I was better able to understand how she had tried to do the task after I'd read the text.* (Marie, IP2: 18)

Here, the interplay between the three ways of approaching the concept of intercultural competence seems to have been helpful in furthering Marie's understanding of another perspective and thereby the validity of multiple approaches.

In general, it seems that the creative tasks have the potential to foster reflection and the development of independent knowledge while the subsequent engagement with the text could develop more contextual knowing and constructive thinking as students were able to judge and compare their own work against knowledge produced by experts in the field. As some students acknowledged themselves, too often scholarly texts are taken at face value so investing in the generation of their own knowledge through arts-inspired tasks in advance of reading showed potential for promoting a more critical engagement. Having had the opportunity to develop their own voice and ideas through the creative process, several students felt in a better position from which to read the text critically and develop or defend their own position in response to it. Thus, it can be argued that contextual knowing is fostered and personal knowledge can be integrated with expert knowledge to foster "constructive thinking" (Thayer-Bacon, 1995; 2000).

As is reflected in Marie's comments in particular, this way of working can also foster students' awareness that scholarly conceptions of intercultural competence are also socially constructed in specific contexts and are therefore contingent and open to critique and reconstruction from other perspectives. Students are not therefore simply "making a collage", but are rather using the process to surface and express their own complex ideas around notions of intercultural competence without, in most cases, feeling constrained by academic knowledge that appears as "the truth" and which is produced by "a person who seems to be really important" (Sarah, IP1: 8). The subsequent

encounter with literature on the same theme had the potential to both foster self-reflection and constitute a rupture with "what is supposedly fixed and finished, objectively and independently real" as students critically engaged with academic knowledge (Greene, 1995: 19).

6.3 Creative Collaboration as CICP: The 'Culture' Poster

The pedagogical value of working on the poster task was also tied up in the way that students communicated and collaborated in their groups. As previously explained, the course privileged the development of relationships and intercultural practice over, for example, the acquisition of comprehensive knowledge of IC theories. The previous chapter discussed how students were able to develop their ideas through the creative process, which also proved the case when working together on the culture poster in groups. This section moves to consider the relational elements of working together on this task in more detail, revealing both the potential and the problems encountered. In the following four subsections I will discuss four emerging subthemes within the theme of creative collaboration (see Table 5.1) which emerged from interview and portfolio data analyses. The first subtheme (6.3.1) concerns the way students collaborated to build on one another's ideas, the second (6.3.2) examines the way group communication was enhanced by creative collaboration, and the third subtheme (6.3.3) deals with the way that increased personal investment in the task can be seen to impact on interpersonal connections. The fourth subtheme (6.3.4) examines cases in which creative collaboration was viewed as having fallen short.

6.3.1 Generative Communication as 'Collaborative Emergence'

The creative tasks appeared to foster "collaborative emergence" (Sawyer, 2007) as students built on one another's ideas in their discussion of 'culture', abandoning initial ideas as better ones were developed in response. In most cases each group member was viewed as having contributed to the final creation:

> *We built on each other's ideas. If one person had one idea and another thought of something better, we just gave up the first idea.* (Xiu, IP2: 1)

> *It turned out to be a very creative solution which everyone influenced in their own individual way.* (Marie, portfolio entry)

> *When we were doing [...] the poster we were all speaking and speaking and speaking and giving ideas [...] and there was no moment where we were just all sitting there and saying like, 'I don't know what to do next.' [...] There's always a new idea coming from someone so you can always improve what you're doing.* (Louise, IP1: 1)

Nina, who filmed some of the groups working, noted how the artistic tasks allowed all students a way into the task, including those who had been less vocal at the beginning of the lesson. Peter was able to give a specific example of how working on the creative task together increased collaboration in his group and allowed them to build on each other's ideas:

> *I designed this 'outside of the box' part. And then, I made... it was just a sheet and I wrote on it. And then, [another team member] suggested maybe cutting off the edges and making it look like a cloud. That was a different opinion she had about it in order to have a bigger contrast to the whole poster. And I thought it was really fitting. […] So, I didn't think of it, but I think it's even better, it improved it. Stuff like that... or another person suggested breaking a wall.* (Peter, IP1: 4-5)

Peter's description captures the way in which diverse opinions and ideas can be harnessed, as Sawyer (2007) claims, in creative collaboration as ideas are gradually built upon. The communication between group members when working on the creative tasks was generally seen as more generative than the more usual

group discussions and several students noticed the difference in quality. For example, Sarah stated that she had felt that her group had discussed the task "more vividly" as a result of creating collaboratively (Sarah, IP1: 10) while Qinyang noted that noted that her group "always had things to talk about" when working creatively, as opposed to discussions that " sometimes can be really awkward" (Qinyang, IP1: 4). Anne also stated that her group had "discussed everything" as they worked collaboratively and moved step by step towards their completed poster (Anne, IP1: 2).

In addition, several students also felt that the task offered enhanced opportunities to draw on diversity in creative collaboration and encounter new opinions and ideas:

> *The task is also a door – if I open it, I can get to know other people's opinions that are maybe different from my opinion.* (Yunlong, IP1: 1)

> *It is also a lot of fun to create something with people from different cultures. Because we have totally different ideas and it is also interesting to see how people react to your suggestions.* (Qinyang, IP1: 1-2)

> *I'm also content because we got to talk a lot about what culture means to every single group member, found out similarities in our perceptions of this term, and agreed on how to include our different opinions in just one group model.* (Sarah, portfolio entry)

It seems that the communication was judged to be more purposeful and generative in the poster task as students discussed and agreed on the decisions to be made. Additionally, these comments show that students also exposed something of themselves in the process as group members built on one another's ideas to increase the sophistication of their work in a process of generative collaboration. In Sarah's group, the participants progressed from deciding how

to include “different opinions” to sharing “a similar concept” as they mutually worked towards the collaborative emergence of a shared understanding that “just came out because of working on it” (Sarah, IP1: 1). The emergence of shared concepts through communication and collaboration is significant for CICP as it exemplifies in particular how the creative tasks can harness difference as “the source for the creation of meaning” (Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013: 9) and how communication enables individuals to develop in relation to others, both of which also typify a cosmopolitan view of communication.

6.3.2 Natural Conversation and Enhanced Interpersonal Connections

About half the participants indicated that the more natural communication style that developed within the groups when working on the group 'culture' poster enhanced rapport. This was significant for learning within the course not only because it appeared to increase enjoyment, but also because the groups were created specifically to afford students the opportunity to engage in experiential learning, communicating and building relationships with group members from different cultural backgrounds over the course of the semester. This kind of intercultural praxis reflects a critical cosmopolitan approach to IC, conceptualised as “a way of understanding how humans may forge meaningful intercultural connections through everyday mundane interactions and communications” (Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013: 6). Alex, Louise and Mai all reflected that engaging in the collaborative poster task improved communication in the group. In his portfolio, Alex reflected that collaborating on the poster “made the atmosphere way more pleasant and enjoyable”, while Mai wrote in hers that communication improved as the group “started to relax and joke around, which felt nice”. In interview, Louise stated:

> *I felt like the day we made the poster was the day when we improved our relationship because we didn't think about what we have to say – it was just natural to speak and to give ideas and to just communicate with the others.* (Louise, IP1: 4)

Louise wrote in her portfolio that she believed that this relaxed, natural way of communicating stemmed from the fact that the students were physically engaged in the task. Her theory was that she and her group members had been so focussed on the act of cutting out paper shapes that their "brains could finally relax" and they felt more comfortable with one another. For Sarah, working visually had aided communication in her group and allowed students to overcome any linguistic insecurity as they had been able to demonstrate their ideas to other group members rather than rely on clear explanations:

> *It was really helpful that we were able to just show to our group members what we were thinking by, for example, arranging the different areas without yet gluing them. In my opinion we overcame communication barriers much more easily because it was a creative and practical task where not only verbal communication was possible.* (Sarah, portfolio entry)

As in the previous chapter where it was shown that working visually allowed students to transcend gaps in language to express their own ideas, here Sarah shows how the physicalisation of concepts and connections had the potential to bridge gaps and allow students to avoid hesitation or perhaps silence that might otherwise occur in discussion.

Marie felt that the full participation of each group member had led to a productive and playful atmosphere in her group:

> *I had so much fun in my group […] everyone tried to do something [...]. We only have one guy in the group [...] sometimes he had a little bit of a hard time with us girls. Because he was always trying to give his ideas, and then we [said], 'oh, but that's not creative enough' […], but in a fun way. But actually, it worked out pretty good.* (Marie, IP1: 3)

Alex, who had speculated that students wouldn't like these tasks because of the effort involved, also talked about how the improved atmosphere "once you get

started" had motivated him to seek ways to "actively participate" because "the chemistry in the group was good and so you want to be a part too" (Alex, IP1: 4). Piecing these elements together, the physicality of the task seems to have eased communication, improved the atmosphere, and thereby increased motivation to join in and be part of a collaborative creative process. This is also what Greenwood (2012) found in her use of drama to explore the experiences of a group of post-graduate students from Bangladesh studying in New Zealand. Matarasso (2007: 457) argues that working through arts practices can "build people's capacity for an interest in shared enterprise [and] can form a nucleus of self-determination". With all students encouraged to take part and communication more natural, the tasks seem to foster better connections between group members. As Louise said of working on the poster task:

> *And everything that came to our minds, we just talked about it. And then you get to know the people.* (Louise, IP1: 4)

As the group poster task took place in only the fourth week of the course, its potential for fostering interpersonal connections and relationships through enhanced communication can be considered particularly valuable for cultivating respect and setting the scene for future collaborative work. The more equal and active participation that some groups experienced in the creative task can be considered to have fostered more democratic relations within the group and the belief that all group members have something valuable to contribute. Although this did not always happen, as described below in Section 6.3.4, this potential is valuable for a pedagogy that takes engagement in embodied intercultural praxis as the starting point for reflective development and personally meaningful learning.

6.3.3 Personal Investment for Enhanced Interpersonal Connections

The more personal, expressive nature of the creative tasks has already been shown in Section 5.2.6 (Freedom, Autonomy and Full Participation in Personally Meaningful Learning) to have increased motivation and personal satisfaction for

some students. This section shows how personal investment in the group task was identified as having contributed to collaboration and the building of relationships. Anne, for example, linked increased motivation with increased personal investment and increased connection with other group members, each element seemingly working to enhance the others:

> *If you do a creative task, it shows some aspect of your personality [...]I think, in general, you [...] can connect to everybody else more easily. […] You get to know the people around you and I think that's what motivates people.* (Anne, IP1: 7/9)

As the discussion questions I gave out to students in class often specifically asked them to draw on their own experience, Anne seems to be suggesting that personal investment has a very different quality when it comes to artistic, hands-on tasks. Peter echoed Anne's comments about the personalised nature of creative tasks enhancing interpersonal connections, and also made an interesting point about the ways in which shared participation in the culture poster allowed him to get to know his group members better:

> *It tells you a lot about the person, I think, when you see them doing something creative. [...] Then, you see them doing things and moving in a different way than they would just after reading a text where everyone is talking about which part they thought was most interesting.* (Peter, IP1: 4)

As Peter acknowledges here, we communicate through our bodies as well as through words, and working together in creative ways that involve the physical acts of cutting, positioning or sticking can communicate something different to others about who we are. As Louise said, “it's not the same way of interacting” (Louise, IP1: 1). Thus, in collaborating in hands-on tasks, it is possible that group members learned things about their group members that they would not necessarily have encountered in a usual discussion task. The embodied nature of the tasks can bring another dimension to the intercultural contact within the

groups and is therefore an important feature of an IC class that harnesses the personal experiences of the students for reflection and learning.

Other members of Anne's group also noted how collaboration on the group poster constituted a turning point for the atmosphere within the group (see section 6.3.2). It can be argued that activities which allow students to draw on their personal experiences do not only foster engagement in learning in the individual student, but also have the potential to enhance teamwork. Students who choose to take a course in IC are highly likely to be interested in others and in this case it seems that the self-expressive dimensions of the collaborative creative task enabled some students to connect with one another in more meaningful ways. It seems likely that the increased motivation Anne experienced stemmed both from investing herself personally in the activity and from her recognition of relational benefits generated by each team member's personal investment.

6.3.4 When Creative Collaboration Fell Short

Although most participants indicated that they had found the collaborative poster task an enriching assignment, three students expressed a certain dissatisfaction. Firstly, for Martin, the task was enjoyable, but its artistic nature was not viewed as having any added value:

> *I think the idea is really good and nice, also to kind of visualize culture, but I'm not a big fan of making things and I know I'm not good at drawing. If there's someone who likes it and who is good at it, fine. But I'd rather write it down. The idea is good but for me, personally, [it's only valuable] because it's nice to kind of take part and to do the actual cutting.* (Martin, IP1: 3)

Martin's comments demonstrate that he enjoyed working as part of his group, but there does not seem to be any other added value in working in creatively in his case. In interview Martin also described himself as “first a perfectionist” and a group member who feels responsible for “the organising part” and it is possible

that Martin's views of himself and his learning preferences have become entrenched and potentially prevent him from profiting from other ways of working. On the other hand, his open and honest comments, also with regard to the individual collaging task, perhaps indicate that arts-inspired, creative ways of working do not suit all learners.

Two students, Klara and Yuwei, indicated that they had felt excluded within their group and that this had decreased their enjoyment of the task. In Klara's case, the rest of her group was missing from class so I asked her to work with another group who were missing some team members. Klara felt that her classmates had "put up a wall" and she had the impression that her ideas were regarded by the others as less valuable "because they were in their group and I was just a lone girl" (Klara, IP1: 2). Yuwei's case was somewhat different as her disappointment lay in the communication within her regular group and was centred on linguistic exclusion.

> *Sometimes I like doing these creative tasks, but not always. [...] My group wasn't my favourite group and we didn't become very good friends. Some people, when they are with foreigners like me they only speak English [...], but they didn't always speak English […] so if I do it myself maybe it's better […] sometimes who I'm with is very important to me, it's not about what I'm doing.* (Yuwei, IP2: 1)

Yuwei felt excluded from her group as they hadn't always made the effort to speak in English. Although her comment that "doing it was actually better than talking about the idea" (IP2: 1) perhaps supports the idea that creative collaboration can enhance interpersonal connectedness, her experience was nonetheless tainted by her disappointment in the overall lack of connection to the rest of her group members. Yuwei's comments show just how important social experiences can be for learning, with the learning community sometimes considered more important than the design of the learning task itself. The creative tasks were envisaged as promoting inclusion and effective intercultural practice and in most cases this clearly worked, but not for Yuwei, who felt excluded linguistically and therefore also from relationships other group

members shared, or Klara who felt like an outsider within another established group. However, these issues need not necessarily be viewed as limitations of the creative group task itself. On the one hand, Yuwei and Klara's experiences may indicate a need for the educator to keep a closer eye on group dynamics, possibly deploying team-building activities at an earlier point in the course or providing clearer guidelines for communication. Equally though, such experiences can be considered part of the learning experience, particularly if investigated in self/group reflection, showing students that IC is often difficult and stressful, and potentially requires persistence and resilience.

6.3.5 Summarising Creative Collaboration on the 'Culture' Poster Task

Creative collaboration in the group poster task was therefore not seen as wholly successful by all participants, but many students indicated its potential for enhancing communication and connections between group members. As in the previous chapter, the physical nature of the task and the clear goal it provided emerged as important for improving student participation, creating a relaxed atmosphere in which conversation became at once more natural and more personal. In this way, the group culture poster appeared to contribute to CICP by fostering intercultural interaction and the development of intercultural relationships, taking the students' ideas and experiences themselves as the starting point for learning. In collaboratively creating conceptualisations of culture, participants practised developing ideas in relation to others and most groups were able to harness difference in outlook or ideas to produce work that was more sophisticated as a result of the diversity of the input. In creating the posters, the students were arguably taking agency in choosing how they engaged and contributed to the process, which also contributed to the goal of supporting self-determination.

6.4 Sharing Artistic Work as CICP: The 'Intercultural Competence' Collages

As explained in Chapter 4, after creating their individual collages, students were given fifteen minutes to share their work with another student and asked to pair up with someone to whom they had not yet spoken. Because this activity took

place at the end of the semester, most established groups had become very familiar with one another and I wished to reintroduce an element of the unknown into their conversations. They were told that they could take it in turns to explain their work, discuss concepts and ideas, and exchange questions as they felt appropriate. In interview, and to a lesser extent in their portfolios, participants reflected on the sharing process in mostly positive terms, with "interesting" emerging as the adjective most frequently used to describe the process. Analyses of their views led to the emergence of three subthemes that were significant for intercultural learning and are discussed in the following three subsections. Firstly, some participants' comments suggested that the sharing process had helped them understand the validity of multiple perspectives. Secondly, the sharing process also appeared to have fostered self-reflection in many cases. However, there were occasions when the communication was felt to have been unsatisfactory: these are dealt with in the third subsection, which also suggests that ambiguity and unsatisfying experiences can be valuable for CICP.

6.4.1 Fostering an Appreciation of Multiple Perspectives

The research participants were invariably confronted with images that were very different from their own and which also often expressed very different ideas of intercultural competence. However, there did not seem to be any discussion about the relative merits of each individual approach, and students proved very open to the ideas of their classmates:

> *[My partner's collage] was more like intercultural competence as analysing things […]. But I think it was an interesting approach. […] As I told you, I was influenced. I already knew what to expect from the term, and so I had this idea. And with someone else: a completely different thing, a different view. It was fine: it sounded logical.* (Martin, IP2: 8-9)

> *The Italian Erasmus student [I spoke to], her collage was focused on travelling [...] getting to know other people and cultures. I really*

> *liked it and […] it put a different angle or perspective on it. […] I actually would have liked to see more [collages]. They were probably so different. I saw Elif's and I loved hers. [...] I really liked her perspective, too.* (Jessica, IP2: 4)

In these examples, students demonstrated that they were able to understand and value perspectives that were different to their own. Sharing personal artwork seems particularly suited to encouraging communicative connections that are based on empathy and respect for difference, in contrast to other class tasks that may, for example, stimulate debate over the "best" solution. As Martin said:

> *I think we are speaking with people and just accepting what they are thinking. Because, […] in this class, I feel like I can't change the minds of people. If they think something and I think something else, it will just be, 'okay, I understand what you mean. I don't think the same but it's okay.' We just talk about it. I feel like this class was more about understanding what people think and just trying to accept that everybody has a point of view and they are not the same.* (Martin, IP2: 9)

These students' comments illustrate how sharing the collages, as part of the course as a whole, can foster respect and the acceptance of different opinions. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, fostering this capacity for multiperspectivism is valuable for CICP and cosmopolitan pedagogy, which both encourage empathy and intersubjectivity in communication with others. Appiah (2006: 78), for example, points out that understanding different viewpoints does not require agreement, and changes in thinking can still be gradually acquired through contact with those who think differently to us.

In their portfolios, both Marie and Esther included photos of their own and their partner's collage side by side, with Esther, for example, reflecting on the different symbolism of the background colours and images used to represent

"culture". Caroline reflected in some detail on her partner's collage in her portfolio, linking stories her partner had recounted to her own experience and ideas in an example of intersubjective understanding:

> *She told me that her room-mate is Moroccan and […] he does not eat pork so they try to eat meals together that are pleasing for both of them. I think religious differences and stereotypes connected with religion can be a huge hindrance for intercultural communication, but they can also enhance it. I often talk to my parents about religion. [Although we do not share the same beliefs,] we respect the faith of the other. [...] Through intercultural communication you can strengthen your own stance while learning to understand other perspectives better.* (Caroline, portfolio entry)

Caroline's claim that intercultural communication allows individuals to "strengthen [their] own stance while learning to understand other perspectives better" echoes cosmopolitan pedagogy which aims to foster the development of reflective distance that allows students to be open to others and reflect on their own perspectives, while still remaining attached to their own values (Hansen et al., 2009). All in all, the sharing process, most often characterised as "interesting", can be seen as cultivating curiosity and an "inquiry" attitude towards others that is key to Sorrells' notion of "intercultural praxis" (Sorrells, 2013), as well as contemporary, critical conceptions of cosmopolitanism (e.g. Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013). These are further discussed in the following chapter.

6.4.2 Fostering Self-Reflection

This section focusses on the extent to which sharing artistic work fostered self-reflection. Some participants reflected in more depth about the specific differences between their own and their partner's collage, whether those be in approach or the ideas expressed. For example, Caroline noticed and found it "interesting" that another student had approached the task in a very different

way: whilst Caroline had been "focused on including all sorts of different sides" in her collage, she felt her partner had included things she considered "most important" and taken a "more associative and spontaneous" approach to the task (Caroline, IP2: 5). Ronja also found it "interesting" that her own and her partner's collages "differed from each other so much in the use of pictures and form" (Ronja, portfolio entry). Her reflection also demonstrates that considering her partner's collage led her to reconsider her interpretation of the key words that appeared in the collage:

> *At first, I thought inequality and variety are almost the same but then I thought of inequality in terms of cultures which are considered less prestigious than others or might be oppressed by other ones.* (Ronja, portfolio entry)

Marie also stated that aspect of sharing the collages that she found "most interesting" was the fact that her partner's and her own solutions were "so different". Although she is able to identify differences in approach, she concludes in her reflective portfolio that, when both collages are viewed as a "whole work", both students can be said to have had "a similar idea" in mind (Marie, portfolio entry). Thus, the tasks seem to have fostered reflection on the differences and similarities in approach to the collage, as well as the ideas students expressed. Appiah, in his conception of cosmopolitanism, tells us that variety matters because exposure to different ways of doing and being shows individuals that different options are available (Appiah, 2006). In seeing other perspectives and ways of approaching the collage work, students can see that other options are possible and valid. In their reflections, these participants mediate their views of their own approach and that of their partner.

Sorrells (2013: 233) also identifies self-reflection as a key aspect of intercultural competence and formulates this as the ability to "critically analyze one's positionality and interrelationship with others". This involves the recognition of ourselves as culturally conditioned individuals. The collage that Lena made concerned the importance of direct intercultural experience for the development of competence and cautioned against a reliance on media

portrayals of culturally different Others. When sharing her collage with a student from China, she discovered that she too was working under the influence of popular stereotypes, exemplified by her assumption that a partner from China would not understand the ideas expressed in her collage. This appeared not to be the case and led Lena to reflect:

> *I was somehow surprised but I shouldn't have been surprised. I was actually glad that I noticed that I was at this point of questioning myself, so I took a step further in actually noticing the step. I think before this class, I would just take my prejudices or my first thought for granted. […] It's easier to just stick to the status quo, to just accept it as it is. Because it's more difficult to question oneself and always think again about certain ideas or other views.* (Lena, IP2: 4)

Lena's reflection on reflection, or meta-reflection, again demonstrates how the sharing process can potentially help students, in the encounter with others, recognise how they have grown and developed their own reflective capacities. Lena's comments about questioning herself and rethinking the views she and others hold shows that, in her case, the task has highlighted the importance of self-reflection for intercultural communication, encouraging her to stretch herself and take a step towards more critical self-awareness and an inquiry stance that characterises "intercultural praxis". Sorrells writes:

> Often, it is easier to stay with what is comfortable and familiar instead of taking risks to learn about others. Seemingly, it takes much less effort to hold onto our judgements about others and take refuge in old stereotypes rather than suspend judgements and question our preconceived ideas of those who are different from us. (Sorrells, 2013: 232)

From the data presented in this section, it can be argued that sharing their collage work encouraged some students to engage in reflection and take an inquiry stance towards both their own and others' approaches and perspectives.

As a form of CP, CICP can also be considered an emancipatory education that seeks to enable students to free themselves from “the status quo” and “always think again about certain ideas”, as Lena puts it. Sorrells (2013) points out that intercultural praxis requires individuals to be motivated to engage with cultural 'others' and thus it can be argued that the self-reflection that is fostered in the process of sharing creative work may increase students' willingness to encounter and consider alternative perspectives as part of intercultural interaction.

6.4.3 Fostering Communicative Awareness

This section deals with cases in which communication around the artistic tasks presented participants with challenges. During interview it emerged that communication in the collage sharing process had not been entirely unproblematic:

> *It was kind of hard to explain [my collage]. I managed somehow and I think he understood what the poster was supposed to represent because he was nodding all the time and agreeing. So, I hope he understood it.* (Sarah, IP2: 17)

> *I would like to know if [my partner] can remember my work, what she thinks about it now. She said she liked it, but I don't know.* (Lena, IP2: 5)

> *When I tried to explain [my collage], I couldn't really say much. I was a bit stuck again. Because I had to think about it more. Actually, when I went home, I thought about it a lot and then it came to my mind, but I couldn't explain in the beginning. But actually, it was okay because she said she understands, or she thinks she understands. I hope she did. Or she just took something from it.* (Jessica, IP2: 4)

In these comments it can be seen how some students were able to reflect on their own communication, recognising that it is often difficult and fallible. Participating in such conversations, they are arguably developing the capacity to recognise challenges and also live with the uncertainty and ambiguity inherent in intercultural dialogue.

All three comments above also demonstrate caring attitudes towards the students' conversation partners: the consideration of others' understanding and reactions demonstrates empathy in the face of fallible communication. Sorrells and Nakagawa (2008: 30) argue that the process of intercultural dialogue invites us "to imagine, to experience and to engage creatively" with different perspectives and beliefs while acknowledging that full understanding and agreement may not be possible. In sharing their collage work in pairs students are arguably cultivating this capacity, although the process will certainly be different for each individual. The students quoted above demonstrate critical self-reflection, empathy, and the capacity to tolerate ambiguity in conversation. However, communication does require the mutual ability and willingness to take part and in one participant felt that the dialogue with her partner had been disappointing:

> *I noticed that other people around us were talking more and were discussing competence more. […] I just felt like I was talking to myself, actually. [...] [Her collage] looked really nice [...] but I didn't get the idea behind it because she was not really telling me. I tried to find it out but... I don't know. It just didn't click. [...] We just didn't really have a discussion. So, I was a little bit disappointed in the end.* (Marie, IP2: 17)

Another student admitted that she had not understood all aspects of her partner's collage as it had been difficult to hear her, and she had considered it too awkward to keep asking for repetition. Again, although these experiences may have felt frustrating, dealing with frustration, or even conflict, can also be considered an important aspect of intercultural learning. Learning to both tolerate and reflect on ambiguity and problems in interaction can be considered

part of the process as we develop as individuals and communicators. It may be that some students, all young adults, were not yet ready to do this, but most were, and so it is hoped that participation in the sharing process also fosters this capacity.

6.4.4 Summarising the Experience of Sharing the Collages

The reflection and multiperspectival thinking demonstrated in the quotations above suggest that this interaction provided the students with a great deal upon which to reflect. In fostering listening and reflection on one's own position in light of the views of others, the process arguably allows students to understand themselves and others better, while also leaving them open to change as individuals who are constantly recreating themselves (Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013). A cosmopolitan view of IC considers interaction as presenting possibilities for self-transformation as "actors are forced to re-evaluate their positions in the light of the perspective of the Other" (Delanty, 2009: 254). This process does not imply persuasion or debate but rather engagement with others, understanding and empathy (Appiah, 2006; Delanty 2009; Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013). Equally, as Caroline also pointed out in her portfolio entry, intercultural interaction can allow individuals to strengthen their own positions whilst understanding others. This can be viewed as a feature of cosmopolitan thinking that allows for "the juxtaposition of reflective openness and reflective loyalty" towards the values people hold and the ways they express them (Hansen et al. (2009).

A very different atmosphere seemed to be created when the students came together to share their artistic work, and this would seem to point to some of the potential of these tasks for fostering attitudes valuable for CICP. It has been claimed, for example, that viewing art created by others enables empathic understandings through "excursionary learning, where we cross the boundaries of our own experiences and explore the territory of others" (Stout, 1999: 33). Bresler writes of the "living presence" that exists in a person's artwork, encouraging us to engage in ways that "evoke sympathetic awareness, awakening dialogue" (Bresler, 2006: 61). Participant comments about sharing

their collages very often demonstrate an openness to others, self-awareness, and ability to put themselves in another's place that would support these views, thereby demonstrating their potential for CICP.

6.5 Summary of Chapter 6

The previous chapter focussed on the ways that participants felt the arts-inspired tasks had been conducive to their learning and for the generation of ideas by increasing motivation, personal engagement and allowing space for divergent thinking. In this chapter, I have built on the analysis presented in Chapter 5 to demonstrate how these tasks can be considered suitable for a CICP that aims at cultivating open, critical and reflective minds, a deeper understanding of the complexity of intercultural education, and student agency. Although the intention was not to prescribe the competencies that students should achieve in the IC course, it is possible to demonstrate how the activities, in the context of the course, could foster ways of thinking and acting that correspond with modern, critical conceptions of cosmopolitanism, as well as Sorrells' (2013) theorisation of “intercultural praxis”.

The collaborative culture poster that the students carried out in the fourth week of the course seemed to function very well as a relationship-building activity for most students, and also enabled the groups to generate thought-provoking ideas and insight in the form of “collaborative emergence” (Sawyer, 2010: 366). Working together in more embodied ways on an artistic task seemed to foster more natural communication and personal connections than the more conventional discussion tasks students were familiar with. However, it must be acknowledged that it was not a wholly satisfying experience for two participants who felt to some extent excluded in their groups. The group task may also function as an effective precursor for the individual collages that were created in the penultimate class. Creating individual collage conceptions of intercultural competence seems a more challenging task, but none of the course members was unable to participate and most participants were able to generate ideas that harnessed their own experience and knowledge to move beyond dominant, everyday understandings of “competence” towards more personalised

conceptions. The process of sharing the collages seemed to demonstrate that artistic ways of working encouraged an inquiry stance towards other's ideas and perspectives, self-reflection and an awareness of one's own positioning, care and empathy, and a tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity in communication.

Although there is not enough evidence to claim that significant personal transformation occurred as a result of participating in these tasks alone, many participant comments may be read as demonstrating that these artistic ways of working played their part in sowing the seeds or contributing to this development. The following chapter brings together the findings presented thus far and discusses the ways in which key findings serve to answer the research questions in light of and contributing to the existing literature.

I N T E R L U D E

Whose time is it anyhow? Temporal double binds

"In the end, I really don't feel that I'll come out of my degree and have learned so much. Of course, I have read much more. And I have some basic knowledge about some linguistic concepts. But that's it, basically. I feel that the time is so small and we have to go chasing those credit points and to achieve certain grades. We don't feel free enough to invest in certain kind of areas and topics individually that we like because we feel that we have to get through in six semesters, and that's why I often went to courses that I just attended really for the credit points, or there were other courses I was interested in but I had so much to do that semester that I really didn't invest enough effort in them... to achieve...to learn something for myself. So, I went there and just tried to get the credit points. I think this kind of system doesn't leave much space for individual learning.

"When you've finished your master's you're, like, twenty-three and you're supposed to be doing something in your life but in all this stress, you didn't have the time to figure out what you really want to do with your life. This kind of studying won't produce independent minds. And that's what university is actually supposed to do. It's supposed to help you think critically about things and be independent in your thinking. And when you're just hunting credit points, you will never find a field that you're really interested in and go deep into it.

"In this course, it's really sad if you miss one or two lessons of this course. But then I stay at home because I have that big thing coming up next week and I really need to be okay. We have to prioritise so much in our studies that we don't have the chance to actually commit to any course enough to get something out of it. If you have such a tight schedule and so many extra things to do for certain classes, then you're really likely to just not go. Especially since we have so many classes where you only have to give a presentation get credit. And then you feel like, 'okay, I'll give that presentation and I won't go there anymore.' There are so many classes that are like that."

(Caroline, second interview phase)

I N T E R L U D E

New Territory: Being a Novice Researcher Using Arts-Inspired Methods

The idea of exploring arts-inspired methods for learning in my IC class was developed in conversation with Katja Frimberger, who had incorporated artistic processes into her own drama-based workshops for intercultural education. Her enthusiasm for these methods was infectious and, at the time, she wasn't the only person drawing my attention to the ways in which the arts could enhance learning across educational settings. For example, for a couple of semesters I'd been showing students in another course Ken Robinson's TED talk 'Do Schools Kill Creativity?' and reflecting with them on the types of learning that have been privileged in the forms of education we've experienced. Looking back on my own school and undergraduate years, I certainly felt that I had missed out on more artistic ways of working and I was eager to try new methods in my own classes.

As a novice researcher with no experience or training in using arts-based approaches, I found designing suitable arts-inspired tasks a particular challenge. Firstly, it was important to me to conceive of tasks that were 'realistic' to extent that they would be feasible even if they weren't part of a research project. All the most promising ideas seemed to be ruled out by time or material constraints. For example, I would have loved to ask students to create Lego models, but carting enough Lego into university for (potentially) 32 students would have been too impractical, even if I'd been able to gather enough of it together in the first place. Even the collaging task that I asked students to carry out involved considerable extra work: it wasn't easy to collect together enough stimulating magazine images for students to work with: in a workshop of, say, eight participants, this wouldn't have been difficult, but for 32 it was another matter.

I also needed to consider the course aims and the students themselves. On the one hand, I wanted to push the students out of their comfort zones to stimulate learning but equally I felt that I had to be careful that I didn't push students out of the class altogether. Because the class was heterogenous, I needed activities that were open and challenging, yet inclusive. When I looked at other studies into arts-based learning I realised that, in most cases, either a) they were carried out in settings in which arts-based ways of working were already well-established or b) participants were individuals

who had agreed to take part in a workshop created specifically for the purpose of collecting research data. My case looked different: the research participants were to be the students who were already enrolled in my IC course and I, as a novice researcher working with arts-inspired methods, was about to treat them as guinea pigs for my research. The stakes felt high from a pedagogical perspective: if the creative tasks didn't 'work' it wouldn't necessarily constitute a problem for my research, but at least two weeks of contact time would have been 'wasted' and the whole course potentially soured by the experience.

So, although I knew intellectually that working experimentally entails the risk of failure, and that this openness to risk-taking was something I aimed to promote and model rather than run away from, the first time I asked students to carry out an artistic task I was terrified of resistance: whilst I couldn't imagine the whole group walking out of class in protest, I could certainly imagine complaints and a number of students simply refusing to take part. In the semester in which I carried out this research it felt particularly challenging to work experimentally in the fourth week of the course with a class that I felt didn't yet trust me and hadn't yet come together as a community. My notes from the time testify to my nervousness and if I hadn't committed myself to the tasks as part of this study, I might well have abandoned them. When I arrived at the beginning of the class, I was immediately dismayed to see so many students missing but somehow this 'spanner in the works' relaxed me as I set about the practical teacher task of merging groups, explaining the activity, and distributing materials. The rest of the class passed mostly as I had hoped it would. There was a significant amount of indecision in some groups about how to approach the task and on occasion I got involved myself, asking questions and making suggestions about how to proceed. In retrospect, I wish I hadn't interfered at all: my input reflected my lack of confidence in the task and in the students' ability to handle it in their own ways. By the time the students came to carry out the second task, the atmosphere in class was more relaxed as relationships had been established and I had a much better connection to the students. The first round of research interviews with participants had greatly facilitated this and their positive feedback had also strengthened my faith in the value of arts-inspired tasks in our setting.

Overall, I feel that jumping in feet first as a novice researcher worked out well, although there is certainly plenty of room for expansion and improvement of the tasks, as analysis indicates. However, it remains a source of disappointment that I wasn't able

to do justice to all the data generated in the research process in this research text, or fully capture a sense of the relationships that developed. The complex, individual, lived experiences that came through in research conversations inevitably 'got lost' in the process of thematic analysis whereby participants' words were transformed into illustrative 'nuggets'. I'm sure that there is a better, less reductive, way of generating and presenting the results from the data gathered and know that there is still so much for me to discover and learn about the creative and artistic possibilities afforded by qualitative research.

Chapter 7 | Discussion: Returning to the Research Questions

7.1 Introduction to Chapter 7

In this chapter I return to the research questions to identify the key research findings and consider their significance in light of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The previous two chapters presented findings that were two-fold: while Chapter 5 established the ways in which the participants' viewed the creative tasks as having enhanced engagement and fostered the generation of new ideas, Chapter 6 built on this analysis to demonstrate how the tasks cultivated attitudes which can be considered valuable for CICP. The discussion in this chapter unfolds similarly, firstly presenting key findings that answer the subquestions formulated for this study and subsequently harnessing these findings to answer the over-arching research question. To recap, the research questions which guided this study were:

Overarching question:

- (How) is carrying out creative, arts-inspired tasks such as collaging and making posters valuable for learning in my critically-oriented 'Intercultural Communication' course? (RQ1)

Sub-questions:

- To what extent and in which ways did participants value the creative, arts-inspired tasks? (RQ2)
- How did participants approach the tasks and what role did the creative process play? (RQ3)
- What were the differences between the collaborative and individual tasks? (RQ4)

Six key findings emerged from the analysis presented in the previous two chapters and these are discussed in the following six sections. Section 7.2 considers how arts-inspired tasks allowed students to draw on personal elements in learning, section 7.3 discusses the role of artistic processes for creative thinking, and section 7.4 considers tensions that were found to be in balance in the creative process. Section 7.5 demonstrates the value of harnessing the

creative 'products' for learning while section 7.6 addresses the qualitative differences between the group and individual tasks, showing how the two tasks achieve different pedagogical goals. Finally, drawing on the evidence presented in sections 7.2 -7.6, section 7.7 addresses the overarching research question to consider the value of using these arts-inspired tasks for my critically-oriented IC course. Here, I draw on scholarship in CICP to suggest that using these tasks both promotes its ideals and extends its boundaries by bringing creative and artistic modes of working into the seminar room. To date, there do not seem to be any comparable examples of the use of such methods for CICP in an HE context. For example, although Hulsbosch (2010) makes a persuasive case for using artistic methods as part of multicultural education, with similar pedagogical aims, her work is theoretical and lacks examples of practice. Section 7.7 in particular shows how this study can fill this gap in scholarship. Section 7.8 discusses the relationships between the key findings and section 7.9 presents a summary of the chapter. As in previous chapters, I indicate the location of participants' quotations with IP1 (Interview Phase 1) or IP2 (Interview Phase 2) and transcript page number.

7.2 Key Finding 1: The Centrality of the Personal in Arts-Inspired Tasks

This section addresses RQ2 (*To what extent and in which ways did participants value the creative, arts-inspired tasks?*) and considers one of the principal features of the tasks that participants most valued: the personalised nature of artistic ways of working. An appreciation of this ran through participant comments about the value of the creative process, the experience of working collaboratively, the embodied nature of artistic tasks, and the opportunities for critical self-reflection. Interestingly, participants did not so much speak of learning becoming personally relevant but rather of the opportunity to put their "personality" into their work. The tasks were conceived to allow students freedom of approach and of outcome and because the creative products were not judged according to any external criteria, students were not under pressure to produce a "correct" answer. This autonomy and the embodied nature of the tasks seemed to facilitate the incorporation of personality and personal experience into artistic, academic work.

The positive links between student-centred education and increased motivation and engagement are well-documented (see, for example, McCombs and Whisler, 1997; Schunk et al., 2010) and the findings of this case study support this understanding, suggesting that artistic ways of working were often viewed as engaging because carrying them out was an inherently personal undertaking. There were two main consequences of this very personal engagement and these consequences in turn appeared to increase motivation to engage further. Firstly, communication and relationships in the seminar room altered and secondly, participation appeared to increase.

In the first instance, as shown in Section 6.3, collaborating on tasks that required students to invest something of themselves was often considered to have changed classroom interaction. In carrying out the group poster task, several students noted how communication and interpersonal connections with other members of the class were enhanced as interaction became more natural and authentic and the working atmosphere in class changed. This was occasionally attributed to physicality of the tasks or the full participation the tasks encouraged, but, while these are important and related features of both tasks, the fact that the group task revealed something of the group members' personalities to one another generally emerged as most valuable for enhancing interpersonal connections. Although Yuwei and Klara were disappointed by the lack of connection they felt to their team members, the majority of participants felt that engaging in the collaborative task had facilitated communication. These participants included Martin, who indicated that the community-building capacities of the group task were more valuable to him than the creative process or the outcome.

Overall, these findings support Greenwood's (2012) discovery that working in artistic ways facilitated more communicative language and engagement in her research into the experiences of Bangladeshi post-graduate students in New Zealand. Greenwood (2012: 12) speculates that this ease in communication occurred either as a result of the physicality of the task or the change in mode from “formal discussion to playful physicalisation”. Participants such as Louise in

the present study also considered the physical "hands-on" nature of the group task significant in that, while working, students' "brains could finally relax", as she theorised it, and they therefore felt more comfortable with one another (Louise, portfolio entry). However, in many cases, the responses provided in this study would seem to demonstrate that the physicality of the task was not valued so much for its own sake but rather because it led students to behave and communicate in ways that felt more natural and revealed something of their personalities.

Secondly, the tasks appeared to increase participation and were viewed as inclusive because all students were able to invest themselves personally to generate unique and individualised outcomes that did not rely on previous academic knowledge or artistic talent. We are all relational beings who have personal experiences to share, and creative processes may also transcend cultural differences as each person has within them the potential for creativity (Simons and Hicks, 2006). Indeed, almost everyone present in class was fully involved in the creative tasks, and several students noted their inclusive nature. The participation of the whole class created an atmosphere of purpose, interest and inclusion which Caroline maintained "makes you think of some stuff from a different angle" (IP2: 2). When everyone was personally invested in classroom tasks and communication eased, this seemed to encourage further engagement and this could signify the dynamic relationships between motivation, personal investment and interpersonal connection with other group members (see Figure 7.1).

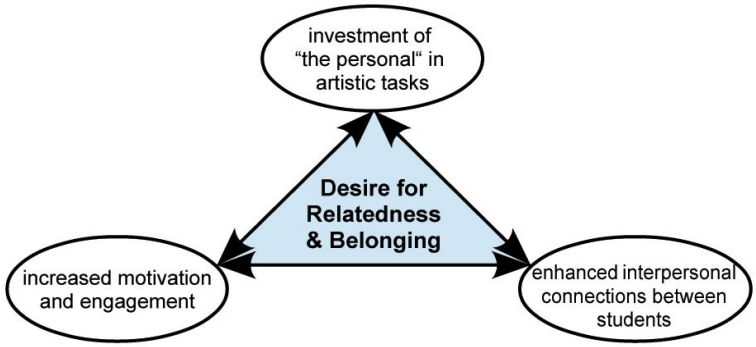

Figure 7.1: The dynamic relationships between participants' motivation/engagement, interpersonal connections and personal investment, driven by a need for relatedness.

These findings support a body of research that has demonstrated how positive interpersonal relationships increase student motivation in educational settings (see, for example, Ryan and Deci, 2000; Furrer and Skinner, 2003). Through social interactions, students develop their own sense of identity, beliefs and values which allow them to integrate into their social environment and create a sense of relatedness and belonging. As discussed in Chapter 2, self-determination theory is particularly useful for understanding the connections between motivation and relatedness, proposing that the desire to meet the need for relatedness motivates students to make meaningful connections with others, while, in turn, a strong sense of relatedness better positions students to take on challenges and set personal goals that extend and motivate them (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Thus, relatedness is positioned at the heart of Figure 7.1 (above). The link between this theory and the goals of CICP appears not yet to have been made in the literature, but it is arguably one that can be capitalised upon in an intercultural classroom in HE. The more natural, authentic conversation that emerged while participating in artistic tasks fostered in most students a willingness to understand and value diversity and differences in opinion, as is discussed in more detail in section 7.6. This stands in contrast to forms of academic discussion which can be competitive and often designed to arrive at the 'best', most objective solution. For language learning, Phipps and Gonzalez (2004: 63) also maintain that “relationships, understanding, integration with others, growth and exchange” motivate language learners on their paths to becoming “intercultural beings”. In their ability to help students meet a need for relatedness by allowing the investment of personal elements, the tasks can be said to create the conditions in which this kind of learning can take place.

Some CICP scholars have explored ways in which students can draw on their own identities and biographies for intercultural learning and Atay and Toyosaki's (2017) edited volume *Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy* presents examples of CICP that foreground the personal in individual learning. These examples include Orbe's (2017) discussion of how students are encouraged to surface, share and critically examine difficult and personal topics in his course *Communicating About Taboo Topics* and LeMaster's (2017) examination of how

queer communication pedagogy is enacted in trans empowerment groups. More closely related to themes that students dealt with in this investigation, Mendoza (2017) proposes that ethnoautobiography can be used in an HE setting to encourage students to consider the impact of colonial history on their own lives and positionality and empower them to become self-reflexive and critically aware. However, these examples do not specifically harness personal elements in order to enhance communication and relatedness between students within the seminar room. In the present study, the use of arts-inspired tasks played an essential role in achieving this, changing the tone of classroom conversation and allowing students, as part of a natural process of dialogue, to open themselves to others and allow their own ideas shift in the process.

This form of interaction reflects a critical cosmopolitan view of the self as not fixed but continually under re-creation in exchange with others (Beck, 2006). It also exemplifies a cosmopolitan view of dialogue that does not require that we persuade others of our own views, but stresses the meaningful connections that are cultivated through everyday, authentic intercultural interaction (Appiah, 2006; Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013). Furthermore, the artistic work was viewed by some participants as enabling them to communicate using more than words, which can be considered a significant advantage in seminar room in which students were communicating in a foreign language. As a result, these ways of working were also viewed as accessible and inclusive. Thus, in contrast to storytelling or expository writing, working visually seemed particularly well-suited to a heterogeneous intercultural classroom where students have a wide variety of first languages and varying English language skills. In sum, although CICP scholars have acknowledged the importance of the personal for individual learning, this study extends practice by showing that arts-inspired ways of working can capitalise on students' desire for personal investment to create more inclusive, relational approaches to working in class.

7.3 Key Finding 2: Creative Thinking through Artistic Processes

This section considers the role of the creative process in enabling to students to surface ideas and stimulate reflection, thereby answering RQ3 (*How did*

participants approach the tasks and what role did the creative process play?). As the majority of the participants themselves both identified and valued the power of the creative process to foster divergent thinking, this section also addresses RQ2. This section has two subsections: section 7.3.1 discusses the value of the creative process as a form of inquiry, while 7.3.2 deals with the limitations and challenges inherent in the tasks. The value of these findings for CICP are discussed later in section 7.7.

7.3.1 Imaginative Investigations

In particular, engaging in the creative process, whether in collaborative or individual work, was felt to have stimulated the generation of new ideas as students either built on suggestions developed by their group members or found that their own individual work prompted the emergence of new themes and connections. Using artistic processes as a form of inquiry can be characterised as "imaginative investigations" (Sullivan, 2005, xii). Collaging and creating posters represented non-linear ways of working which allowed students to structure their ideas in ways that verbal communication may not allow, whilst also embracing spontaneity and inspiration as their ideas developed, as shown in section 5.3. These findings are supported by literature that argues in favour of using artistic processes as a form of inquiry, with collaging in particular emerging as a productive technique. For example, as discussed in Chapter 2, Simmons and Daley (2013) also found that collage could stimulate scholarly work, helping participants consolidate their thinking and construct new understandings. Meanwhile, in a detailed examination of the value of collaging for arts-based research, Chilton and Scotti (2014) found that collaging can be harnessed as "a tool of discovery" (ibid.: 169). While in the present study the students were not undertaking formal research, this rationale for employing artistic processes is also valid for classroom learning in which students are encouraged to draw on their experience and develop their own ideas. Indeed, in many cases, participants such as Katherina, Sarah, Elif, Yuwei and Ronja indicated that working artistically did play a role in allowing meanings and significance to emerge within the process, with both tasks appearing effective in this regard.

Thus, working through the creative process led to the formation of personally relevant conceptions as part of a "conversation between the worker and the work" (Eisner, 2002: 134). This appeared to be the case regardless of whether the conceptions were meaningful to an individual or represented the emerging consensus of an intercultural group. As discussed in Chapter 2, Simons and Hicks (2006) have argued that art, in the way it enables self-expression, can reconnect people with their own experiences and emotions, which seemed to be the case in the individual collaging task in particular. As can be seen in Section 6.2.2 in particular, the collages demonstrated that students were able to situate their own knowledge in a specific political and social context. As McIntyre (2002) also found when her students worked on collages to explore ideas of whiteness and multicultural education, participants created images both individually and as a group that were "reflected back at them", thereby eliciting ideas that are unlikely to have surfaced through language alone (McIntyre, 2002: 33). Comments made by students such as Ronja, Xiu and Sarah (see section 5.3.4) also support the idea that working through artistic modes allowed participants to overcome the limitations of language and resist the linearity required by written texts or verbal exchanges (Leitch, 2006).

While developing personalised conceptions through artistic processes, students were arguably engaging in valuable reflection as they made decisions about the directions their work would take. Comments made by participants such as Ronja, Elif and Sarah (see section 5.3) support Osei-Kofi's (2013) claim that collaging enables university students to display a deep level of self-reflexivity and Butler-Kisber's (2008) assertion that collaging has the potential to increase voice and reflexivity. Thus, the tasks would seem to represent a valuable extension to traditional approaches to reflection and learning that can be harnessed to engage students in creating knowledge in new ways, pushing their thinking further. Although she does not provide examples of practice, Hulsbosch (2010) has considered how artistic processes might develop insight and foster reflection in students as part of an empowering and critical education, and the value of the participants' "imaginative investigations" for CICP specifically are discussed in section 7.7.

As discussed in Chapter 2, reflection as part of the creative process is not simply cognitive but also involves the senses as part of a nonlinear and multi-layered process (James and Brookfield, 2014). Thus, artistic tasks can challenge the idea of a separation between embodied learning and intellectual development. In HE the cultivation of the intellect through cognitive processes tends to dominate thinking about learning, a view that is challenged by scholars who argue in favour of harnessing artistic processes beyond the Arts. Addison (2011: 375), for example, reminds us that we are all "embodied creatures, beings who feel, think and act through the body on other bodies and are in turn affected", while Eisner (2002) laments the distinction that is made in the literature between cognition and affect, arguing that the mind and the senses are one. The work created by the participants and comments made about the value of the creative process appear to demonstrate that important insight and ideas were generated when students made use of mind-body connections and engaged their whole being in learning.

7.3.2 Limitations and Challenges of the Creative Process

Despite the generally very positive response from participants, engaging in the creative process did not prove a generative form of student inquiry in all cases. As Simmons and Daley (2013) also found, the collaging process did not invariably contribute to participants' thinking and understanding about concepts on which they were working, with limited time and materials occasionally cited as constraints. Beyond these limitations already identified by Simmons and Daley, this case study additionally found that the development of novel ideas through the creative process was hindered if students chose to collage preconceived ideas: when students worked alone to collage their own conceptions of intercultural competence and were not stimulated by the diverse ideas of other class members, three students, Martin, Mai and Marie, drew on their previous knowledge of the way in which such competence is defined by scholars working in the field. Arguably as a result, the creative process did not prove particularly productive for helping these students unearth and develop their own conceptions, with previous knowledge appearing to block novel thinking (Sternberg and Kaufman, 2010). Considering the comments that some students

such as Martin and Sarah made about students' willingness to defer to and accept theories presented in academic literature, it is perhaps not surprising that this was the case. Also, given that other students such as Anne and Elif were initially unsettled by the open nature of the task and/or their previous lack of engagement with the subject of the collage, it is likely that collaging preconceived ideas represented a relatively risk-free and therefore reassuring approach to the task. Although these students benefited in other ways from engaging in the task (gaining satisfaction from the completed collage or being in a better position to engage with the literature, for example), it seems that a valuable opportunity for these students to develop their knowledge further was missed. As a result, it would perhaps be worth addressing this particular challenge with students before they start such a task. Interestingly, the images provided for collaging were only considered limiting if the participant knew from the outset what their work should express; for other participants such as Ronja, Katherina and Caroline the images provided inspiration and stimulated creative thinking.

Although Anne and Alex were sceptical that such creative methods would be of benefit to all students, only Martin remained unconvinced that artistic methods could be valuable for his own learning. On the one hand, Martin's experience may well demonstrate that working in artistic ways simply does not suit all learners, but the way that he and his group approached the two tasks may have helped confirm preconceived views of both himself and the tasks. In the group poster task, for example, his group spent considerable time planning in advance of starting to create the poster, which appeared to stifle the creative process. Furthermore, in the collaging task, Martin already had a clear idea of what he wanted to collage before embarking on the task, likely stemming the development of new and unique conceptions, as outlined above. In the first interview phase, Martin himself noted that working in artistic ways in advance of engaging with academic literature helped avoid a reliance on “one concept dictated by the text that you consider academically useful” (Martin, IP1: 9), but this seems to have been just what happened when he came to collage 'intercultural competence' and based his work on Byram's (1997) model. It is also possible that Martin, a successful student, is happy to continue working in more

traditional ways that have worked well for him to date. Thus, Martin's stated preference for planning and engaging in problem-solving tasks that are “real” (Martin, IP1: 5) may have prevented him from experiencing the advantages of artistic ways of working, despite his professed openness to trying new methods. While it might be the case that two differently conceived artistic tasks would have been of greater benefit to Martin, his experience nevertheless serves as a reminder that not all students can be expected to value arts-inspired tasks, and that preferences for more traditional modes are understandable in academic environments in which learning is usually textually based and instrumental (James and Brookfield, 2014). Martin is only one of 24 participants, but it is quite possible that students who did not volunteer to become research participants felt similarly.

7.4 Key Finding 3: Dialectical Tensions in Arts-Inspired Tasks

Analysis of interview data suggested that creative tasks can provide but also require a balance between seemingly opposing elements in order that the benefits of engaging in the creative process be felt. Although it is unlikely that the ideal balance could be struck for every student, participant responses indicated that when apparent dichotomies were held in tension, satisfaction with the tasks increased (e.g. for Elif, Jessica and Sarah in the collaging task). This section therefore addresses both RQ2 and RQ3 and outlines four significant ways in which tensions were balanced in this case study: Section 7.4.1 deals with product and process-focussed approaches to the task, section 7.4.2 considers freedom within constraints, section 7.4.3 examines the tension between feelings of safety and risk, and section 7.4.4 shows how relaxation can be combined with intensification in artistic tasks. In each case, the discussion is supported by research into creativity, and, taken together, they shed new insight into participants' perceptions of the creative process and the combination of elements that served to motivate and engage them.

7.4.1 Product and Process-Oriented Approaches to Creative Work

As outlined in Chapter 2, product and process-orientated ways of viewing the

value of creativity are often viewed as being in opposition, with a focus on the production of innovative products seen as neglecting the value of the creative process, and vice versa. For example, Beghetto (2010) writes of the existence of a "product bias" in which a teacher feels that student creativity requires the production of a tangible product and values only the 'best' work according to aesthetic, intellectual or other criteria. In contrast, the tasks employed in this study were designed with a "process bias" whereby the exploratory, messy process of making connections and generating ideas was considered more important than the tangible result. However, on analysis, the existence of an 'end product' emerged as valuable for both participant satisfaction and my own pedagogical goals. Firstly, the creation of a poster or collage provided students with a clear goal to work towards, and the creation of a tangible product appeared a motivating factor. Secondly, the finished work served to stabilise the students' ideas, providing them with an opportunity to express and hold onto fleeting thoughts (Eisner, 2005). As such, the creative product was available to students for viewing and sharing, and, rather than shutting off further exploration, enabled a continuation of the reflective thinking that informed its creation (see Section 7.5). Thus, this finding supports Carlile and Jordan's (2012) claim that the distinction between creative process and product may be an artificial one since the process manifests itself in the product. Particularly when artistic tasks are conceived to draw upon and develop reflective thinking, neglecting to critically re-examine or reflect on the creative outcome would seem a missed opportunity.

7.4.2 Freedom within Constraints

The findings of this study also support research into creativity that has demonstrated that creative thinking, perhaps counter-intuitively, thrives within certain constraints (Stokes, 2006; DiYanni, 2016). The productive constraints identified in this study were the existence of clear, pre-defined goals, the limited time to complete the task, and the limited materials available. Firstly, although participants frequently spoke positively of the freedom to approach the tasks as they chose and their pleasure and interest in seeing the unique and diverse outcomes, a completed poster or collage acted as a clear goal towards

which they could work. In this respect, the artistic tasks were contrasted with group discussions, which were sometimes characterised by participants as aimless. So, whilst the tasks were open enough to allow exploration and improvisation, goals that were oriented around the end product were seen as having contributed to positively to the creative process, as also identified by Csikszentmihalyi (1997) and Hennessey (2010). Secondly, the limited time available in which to carry out the tasks was also initially perceived by participants such Jessica and Caroline as a constraint, but this appeared to encourage focus and concentration in most cases. Time constraints only appeared problematic in the group task, and then only when the participants spent considerable time planning before embarking on the making the poster, which, as discussed in the previous section, seemed to stifle the creative process. Limited resources served as a third productive constraint and this was particularly marked in the collaging task. Ronja, Lena and Anne indicated that the images provided for collaging served to stimulate thinking, and classroom observations suggested that this was the case for the majority of students. As discussed in Section 5.3.2, the two participants (Mai and Martin) who felt limited by the images provided were those who also already had a clear concept of what they wanted to express before embarking on their work. Thus, it can be argued that the limited resources available stimulated creative thought when students felt free to generate their own conceptions in an exploratory and open-ended manner but proved frustrating if they did not.

7.4.3 Safety and Risk

Furthermore, findings indicated that feelings of safety and risk can be productively combined. Engaging in unfamiliar and open tasks at first aroused insecurity and confusion in about half the participants as they moved outside their comfort zones. In their research into collaging as method of inquiry, Simmons and Daley (2013) also found that participants reported very similar initial concerns, and James and Brookfield (2014) also warn that students may initially be resistant to trying new modes of learning. Nevertheless, as Wang (2001) suggests, students were able to make new paths and discoveries when working through these initial fears. That participants were overwhelmingly

pleased with both the process and the outcomes also echoes Kraehe and Brown's (2011) finding that pleasure and fear can be inherently intertwined in the creative process as students derive satisfaction from tasks that are inherently risky. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the tasks also provided safety. As can be seen in section 5.2.6, participants such as Jessica, Louise and Yuwei appreciated the security inherent in working on tasks that would not be "judged, or seen as wrong" (Caroline, IP2: 6). The fact that students were not required to meet pre-defined expectations was therefore found to have provided a feeling of safety within which risk-taking could occur.

7.4.4 Relaxation and Intensification

Wang (2001) argues that in designing educational environments that move from the habitual to the novel, the teacher faces the challenge of creating spaces that are both relaxing and stimulating. The findings of this study support the claim that artistic tasks can meet this challenge, with Louise, for example, indicating that she relaxed into the hands-on, creative tasks and became deeply absorbed in the creative process. Vaughan (1985: 41) notes that the balance of these apparent opposites creates a classroom atmosphere which is "emotionally charged" rather than flat, but where the tension in the room suggests that students are pursuing an interest. In the present study, classroom observation suggested that the vast majority of students were very concentrated on their work, particularly in the case of the individual collaging task (as the Interlude *The Students Work on their Collages* aims to convey), while the participants themselves most often characterised the tasks as enjoyable, or "fun". Thus, it seems that the artistic tasks were able to generate a combination of relaxation and intensification, reminiscent of Csikszentmihalyi's (1997) conceptualisation of productive "flow" in the creative experience. Kraehe and Brown (2011) theorise that it is this increased intensity in learning that constitutes the unique pedagogical potential of artistic tasks for encouraging self-awareness and reflexivity, as examined in sections 7.3.1 and 7.7.4.

As can be seen from the discussion in this section, these four apparent dichotomies proved inter-related and are therefore perhaps best considered

collectively. However, it is important to note that students did not have uniform views about which factors enhanced or hindered their learning from the tasks. Equally, responses varied with regard to the extent to which the artistic tasks had achieved the optimal balance between the tensions subsequently identified as most important: for participants such as Sarah, Louise and Xiu, they appeared able to do so, but this was not the case across the board. Nevertheless, viewing the data through perspectives provided by creative learning theories revealed interesting patterns from which these four areas were developed. In section 7.7, I argue that the creative, arts-inspired tasks have great potential for CICP, but in order for this potential to be realised the challenge for educators is first to design appropriate tasks and manage atmospheric conditions. If possible, these should to balance the tensions described above in order to assist as many students as possible in surfacing and elaborating their tacit knowledge in the creative process. This is discussed further in Section 8.4: Research Implications.

7.5 Key Finding 4: Beyond the Creative Process: Creative 'Products' for Reflection and Constructive Thinking

As outlined in Chapter 2, participating in artistic practices is widely believed to cultivate a capacity for critical reflection (Eisner, 2002; UNESCO, 2006; James and Brookfield, 2014). The findings of this study support this view but also suggest that reflection is fostered *beyond* the creative process when the creative products themselves are harnessed for further reflection and constructive thinking. This section thereby extends the original scope of RQ3 (*How did participants approach the tasks and what role did the creative process play?*) to consider not only the role of the creative process but also the pedagogical potential of the creative product for its creator(s).

Firstly, in appreciating the personal and improvisational nature of the tasks and the diversity of outcomes, students evidenced that they were able to recognise that their own creations did not represent conclusive portrayals of either 'culture' or 'intercultural competence'. Furthermore, because the ideas and connections that students made in their creative work could not be judged according to a set of pre-defined criteria, the products offered themselves up

for the students' own analyses (Eisner, 2002). Artistic work seems particularly well-suited to cultivating this form of meta-reflection as they represent non-linear, visual and flexible forms of expression. Sarah (IP1: 10) also noted that the group poster was "presenting itself" and could circumvent verbal explanation, echoing McIntyre's assertion that students find their artistic work "reflected back at them" (McIntyre, 2002: 33). For these reasons, and perhaps particularly because they had produced work that drew on their unique experience and understandings, most participants seemed motivated to critically engage with their 'creative products' and consider potential modification or extension. Particularly when placing them in connection with the scholarly texts provided subsequently, or engaging in conversation with others about their work, further insights emerged, as explored in Chapter 6. This reflection is evidenced both in student portfolios and the comments participants made about their work in research interviews, and both these processes can be considered to have promoted reflective thinking. Examples of this include Lena's realisation in conversation with a Chinese classmate that she herself made assumptions about cultural 'others' that her own collage warned against (Lena, IP2: 4), and Elif's assertion that discussing her collage had led to the realisation that it represented a tribute to her mother (Elif, portfolio entry).

Thayer-Bacon's (1995; 2000) conception of self-reflexivity as part of "constructive thinking" helps explain why engaging with both the ideas presented in the texts and the views of classmates helped develop reflective thinking. She views the perspectives of others as essential in helping us see our biases and the limitations of our own viewpoints:

> The more we are able to communicate and relate to others, the more we become aware of our own selective process, and the more we are able to therefore critique our own or others' influences on our constructing of knowledge (Thayer-Bacon, 2000: 170).

Thus, sharing individual work with others, engaging with scholarly texts subsequent to carrying out arts-inspired tasks and, indeed, reviewing work in research conversations, can all be considered communicative acts that foster

such meta-reflection and constructive thinking. Participant comments indicated how, in a variety of cases, students were able to open themselves to new perspectives, attend to the emotional dimensions of learning, recognise assumptions or omissions in their thinking, or attempt intersubjective understanding, all of which are identified by James and Brookfield (2014) as elements of reflective thinking in HE. Thus, the findings of this research suggest that, to increase opportunities for learning, the creative work should not be seen as an 'end product' but rather an artefact that stimulates further reflection.

7.6 Key Finding 5: Matching Task Advantages to Pedagogical Goals

Thus far, this thesis has only indirectly addressed the difference in impact and value of the two arts-inspired tasks that are under examination in this study and so this section now provides an answer to RQ4 *(What were the differences between the collaborative and individual tasks?)*. The two tasks were carried out at different points in the semester (the group 'culture' poster in week 4 and the individual 'intercultural competence' collage in week 13 of a 15-week course) and had somewhat different goals and these differences need to be taken into account when considering their relative advantages and disadvantages. This section considers the emergence of consensual and individual views, the advantages of the collage images and the drawbacks of group work, arguing that the two tasks overall suited differing pedagogical goals.

Firstly, the group task enabled the emergence of a consensus of ideas, manifesting in a common concept of 'culture', while the collaging task allowed each individual to create their own concept of 'intercultural competence', thus maintaining diversity. Both can be considered valuable for different reasons. For example, working together allowed students to co-negotiate emerging conceptions through the interplay of multiple, diverse voices to create work that is greater than the sum of its parts. In the process, the students' own ideas changed and developed in relation to others and they built interpersonal relationships as they engaged in intercultural communication (see Section 6.3 for more detail). In contrast, encouraging students to express and then share their unique outlook in an individual collage arguably reflects an approach to CICP

that views difference as an asset to be celebrated rather than elided into a consensual view (Appiah, 2006; Holliday, 2011; Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013). Thus, carrying out individual and group tasks can be said to engage students in different modes of intercultural learning, and their relative value will depend on what is prioritised in pedagogy. To some extent though, the difference may not be as straight-forward as this portrayal would suggest: although the individual collage task required students to work alone to create their collage, their conceptions of intercultural competence, which were developed towards the end of the course, emerged at least in part from reflection on knowledge gained over the semester and conversations they had with others. As Csikszentmihalyi (1997) notes, even insights that emerge when individuals reflect in isolation can be traced back to an engagement with others. It is also significant that, as observed in research interviews, a collage's 'meaning' can shift when it is shared with others and a dialogue ensues. These two observations demonstrate that making meaning by means of individual collaging remained part of a social process, reflecting the view that ideas, knowledge, and one's own identity are always constructed in relation to others.

As outlined in section 5.3.2, the magazine images that were provided for collaging were frequently seen as contributing positively to the creative process, serving to stimulate thought or provide structure for a number of students. These images were identified in section 7.4 as providing a satisfying constraint within which creativity could flourish. In contrast, although the students were given fewer materials to create the group poster (paper, scissors, glue and string), the lack of images already available for them to adopt left students with students with more freedom, which made the task more complex and demanding. One result of this complexity was perhaps the tendency to work more conservatively and generate ideas that were fairly easy to generate, as Caniëls and Rietzschel (2015) also found in their study of creativity and constraints in organisations. It is not possible to state conclusively that this was the case, but the examples examined in this study would suggest that the images provided for the collaging task did lead to the generation of more original and sophisticated conceptions.

In some cases, collaborating in groups seemed to discourage students from working spontaneously. Two of the five groups which created the posters spent considerable time planning, which in one case led to the group running out of time and in both cases appeared to inhibit the organic development of ideas. It was also in the planning stages that Yuwei felt silenced and excluded by her group as they discussed their ideas in German rather than English. As Kraehe and Brown (2011) point out, the collaborative process provides no guarantee that all participants will be given equal influence in moulding their group's work, but the groups that worked spontaneously seemed to fair better in this regard, with the ongoing physicalisation of ideas facilitating communication, inclusion and enabling students to collaboratively develop ideas in the creative process. Although it might seem that the individual collaging tasks were therefore better suited to foster spontaneous and improvisational thought, working collaboratively towards a consensus that couldn't have existed beforehand had the advantage that students were not able to circumvent the reflection inherent to the creative process by collaging preconceived ideas.

Overall, the individual collages did seem to communicate ideas which were considerably more sophisticated than those expressed by the group posters. This could be due to the relative ease of working through the creative process individually, the provision of collage images, or simply the fact that the collaging task represented the culmination of learning over the course of the semester. However, considering the various strengths and pitfalls that emerged in analysis, it seems that both tasks proved effective and were deployed at the right times: the group poster task had the advantage of facilitating communication and connections between students at a point in the semester when priority was given to community building, while the individual collaging task was perhaps more successful for generating unique and personally meaningful conceptions that expressed participants learning and development at the end of the course. As noted in Section 6.5, the group task may also function as an effective precursor to the individual collages. If working creatively encourages risk-taking, carrying out the group task in Week 4 may have enhanced students' confidence in their own ability and the value of creative processes, helping them to overcome initial fears concerning the later collaging task.

7.7 Key Finding 6: The Value of Arts-Inspired Tasks for Extending CICP

Drawing on the key findings presented thus far, this section applies and extends the knowledge presented in the previous sections to demonstrate how creative, arts-inspired tasks can be harnessed to advance notions of CICP, with particular reference to critical conceptions of cosmopolitan pedagogy and "intercultural praxis" (e.g. Hansen, 2011; Sorrells, 2013; Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013; Sobré, 2017). In doing so, it addresses the over-arching research question that guided this study: (How) is carrying out creative, arts-inspired tasks such as collaging and making posters valuable for learning in my critically-oriented IC course? This discussion takes place over five subsections that show how a variety of elements can be considered to fulfil CICP criteria, encouraging learning that:

- helps students deal with ambiguity, take risks and cultivate an open mindset (7.7.1)
- develops an understanding of multiple perspectives through relational encounters and collaboration (7.7.2)
- fosters inclusion and an appreciation of difference (7.7.3)
- is contextually situated and reflective (7.7.4)
- can be considered emancipatory (7.7.5)

Overall, it is argued that creative, arts-inspired tasks which harness the imagination and constitute embodied learning can make a valuable contribution to CICP, extending the boundaries of this pedagogy.

7.7.1 Dealing with Ambiguity, Taking Risks and Being Open

Findings demonstrated that taking part in the tasks had the potential to foster openness, the willingness to take risks, and a tolerance of ambiguity, despite the unusual and inherently risky nature of working in arts-inspired ways for these students. Indeed, in working through the initial discomfort that participants such as Anne, Elif, Lena, Marie and Sarah expressed (see Section 5.2.4), students were arguably developing an open attitude to risk-taking and experimentation

that is valuable beyond the task itself. Scholars advocating the use of the creative arts in teaching and learning argue that participation helps upend habitual ways of working and understanding, teaching students to view the world in new ways and fostering a spirit of inquiry (Wang, 2001; Eisner, 2002; Simons and Hicks, 2006; Hulsbosch, 2010). As Laura commented about the group poster task,

> *I liked it because it's something different. I've not had a similar course where we did something like that. […] You just have to be open for new stuff and try it.* (Laura, IP1: 9)

The tasks can therefore be said to cultivate an open-mindedness that can lead to new thinking and openness towards others, with Greene (1995: 147) maintaining that "our ability to tolerate the unexpected relates to our tolerance for multiculturalism". This is a view that is particularly relevant for CICP. Unlike some more traditional forms of IC pedagogy that are instrumental and skills-based, CICP views identity, culture and communication as constantly in flux, contested and mutually constitutive rather than fixed and apprehendable (Halualani 2011; Holliday, 2011; Sorrells, 2013; Sobré, 2017). In this view, cultural difference and IC are not governed by fixed cultural patterns but are rather charged with ambiguity and inherently complex. For this reason, it is not possible to rely on, for example, knowledge of national trends, cultural groups, religions or communication styles, which is seductive since it provides convenient explanations but is over-simplistic and frequently chauvinistic (Holliday, 2011). In fostering in students a tolerance of ambiguity and an openness to cultural others, the arts-inspired tasks arguably contribute to a critical cosmopolitan pedagogy in which uncertainty and curiosity towards others is viewed as "an opportunity for intellectual and moral growth and for new meanings to emerge about how we relate with various cultural Others" (Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013: 88).

Indeed, in CICP, open-mindedness and curiosity are considered essential attributes upon which others are built. For "intercultural praxis" Sorrells (2013) frames this openness as the capacity for inquiry: an interrogative mode of being

in the world that involves a move away from the comfortable and familiar towards taking risks to learn about others. This involves individuals taking the initiative to engage with those who are different rather than simply reacting appropriately when thrust into intercultural encounters. Furthermore, developing such an inquiry stance towards forging intercultural relationships requires courage and vulnerability (Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013). It is not always easy, as Halualani (2017) notes, to translate such goals into classroom practice. Sorrells's (2013) textbook for undergraduate students *Intercultural Communication: Globalization and Social Justice* provides suggestions at the end of each chapter for class activities to help students engage with "intercultural praxis". These principally ask students to discuss the concepts provided by the text, share their reflections on intercultural encounters outside the classroom, or create simulations of intercultural praxis. These exercises are certainly useful and I use similar tasks as part of my own course to help students make connections between the ideas provided in the text and their own lives. However, such activities do not necessarily involve risk-taking, courage and an openness to cultural others within the seminar room itself. The findings of this case study, however, demonstrate that participating in the artistic tasks encouraged most students to engage with ambiguity and cultivated open to risks and the unfamiliar in class. Students such as Jessica, Lena and Esther were able to recognise the rewards of taking part, despite their initial feelings of insecurity and confusion. In this way, the artistic tasks can be said to have the potential to strengthen confidence and the ability to engage with others, despite the risks involved, and therefore provide a valuable enrichment to methods currently deployed in CICP.

7.7.2 Developing an Understanding of Multiple Perspectives through Relational Encounters and Collaboration

The ability of the artistic tasks to foster an understanding of multiple perspectives could perhaps best be identified when students shared their individual 'competence' collages in pairs. Rather than encouraging students to present a convincing case in order to persuade others of their views, as is advocated in some other courses, the sharing process fostered careful listening and the appreciation of others' experiences and perspectives. As Martin

commented, the process involved “understanding what people think and just trying to accept that everybody has a point of view and they are not the same” (IP2: 9).

In this way, the process can also be said to discourage students from reducing other students to cultural stereotypes, viewing their partners instead in their “integrity and peculiarity” (Greene, 1995: 10). Indeed, Lena noticed that she had initially made assumptions about her Chinese counterpart that were based on popular stereotypes, and this encouraged her to become more open and receptive in her communication. For Lena, this encounter led to the realisation that questioning her own assumptions and media portrayals of cultural others requires effort and entails personal growth (see section 6.4.2). These findings support Greene's (1995: 3) assertion that aesthetic encounters with others can become experiences that define who we are and become in relation to others as we are able to “look in some manner through strangers' eyes”. Stout (1993: 33) also claims that looking at artwork created by others can constitute a form of “excursionary learning” in which participants are able to leave the bounds of their own experience and “explore the territory of others”. As shown in section 6.4.2, students such as Jessica, Caroline, Ronja and Marie found their partners' approaches to the collaging task intriguing and thought-provoking and were very interested in understanding the perspectives of their counterparts.

Sobré (2017) is among the CICP practitioners who have encouraged undergraduates to share personal stories and perspectives and she has noted the beneficial relational results of doing so. For example, when asking her students to share their family histories and reflect upon the influence of systemic privilege on these narratives, she found that students reacted empathically to others and shared insights. The sharing of collages in this case study can be said to work in similar ways, as students shared very different, personalised ideas of 'intercultural competence' and developed an understanding of another perspective. However, sharing artistic work can arguably offer unique advantages. Firstly, the existence of a collage also offered communication partners visual clues which appeared to facilitate communication in a classroom in which students were communicating in a second language. Furthermore, arts-

inspired tasks also encouraged exploratory questioning in an open-ended, reflective process that extended beyond the creative process (see section 6.2). Finally, accounts of family histories may be static whereas the existence of student's creative work, as the product of “imaginative investigations” (Sullivan, 2005, xii), also allows others to engage and extend interpretations, potentially shifting the meanings expressed in the work.

While the data suggests that the individual 'competence' collage was the better task for helping students appreciate multiple perspectives, the group poster can also be considered valuable for developing this capacity. Collaborative engagement in artistic tasks can be argued to help students build bridges among themselves and work constructively together because such tasks encourage individuals to empathise with others, appreciate other perspectives and create bonds (Bresler, 2006). This seemed to be the case for most students when working together in small groups to create the 'culture' poster. Students such as Louise, Sarah, Peter and Qinyang commented positively on the ways in which the task allowed for the incorporation of each group member's individual ideas in the production of personalised and unique conceptions of 'culture'. For Sawyer (2010) this constitutes a process of “collaborative emergence”. Students did not so much have mental representations that *were* simply in agreement, rather they *created* agreement in a joint process of intersubjective coordination as part of the creative process (Sawyer, 2010). This in turn improved interpersonal connections (see section 6.3). For Phipps and Gonzalez (2004), “intercultural being” involves, amongst other elements, focussing on relational encounters and exchange, and the tasks appear a good fit for CICP in their ability to foster understanding and personal connection through processes that saw students mutually draw on and extend one another's ideas. As yet, the potential of creative, collaborative processes to develop relatedness between students in an IC course in HE does not seem to have been recognised in CICP literature and thus the tasks can be argued to contribute to and extend conceptions of this pedagogy.

7.7.3 Fostering Inclusion and an Appreciation of Difference

CICP also requires education to foster social justice, which can happen by

encouraging students to cultivate equitable relationships with others who may seem “culturally distant” in the classroom (Sobré, 2017: 48). Whilst it was not the case across the board, almost all students were engaged and absorbed when working collaboratively or sharing their work with others, and Jessica noted in interview that most students would not normally engage in this way in class with students they did not already know. Additionally, the creative arts have been argued to promote inclusion and participation since they adjust themselves to the learning styles of students as approaches and end-goals remain open (Simons and Hicks, 2006). This seemed to be the case for participants in this study as all of them managed to overcome any initial concerns about their capacity to complete the tasks.

Furthermore, the tasks answered calls for CICP to teach and regard difference as an asset rather than as an obstacle to overcome (Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013). Both the group and individual tasks appeared well-suited to fostering a view of diversity within the groups as enriching and a source of learning. In the group task, as outlined in section 6.3.1, students were able to harness the diversity of the group to create one single collaborative outcome. Findings presented in 6.4.1 also showed that students such Jessica appreciated the diversity that emerged in individual collaged conceptions of 'intercultural competence'. Particularly in the latter case, it can be argued that the focus was not on overcoming difference or smoothing it over as if it were the source of problems. As such, the tasks can be considered valuable for CICP and reflect a view of intercultural communication in which “to be intercultural is to be dialogic, to celebrate difference, otherness, and plurality” (Xu, 2013: 379). Again, this advantage of working artistically in an IC undergraduate seminar room has yet to be explored by CICP scholars. So, although Sobré (2017), for example, examined a case in which young people discovered the benefits of collaborating with others from different cultural backgrounds as part of the development of a social networking site that included the creation of digital artwork, this research has a very different setting. Thus, it can be argued that the present research extends the boundaries of CICP in HE, showing that arts-inspired, creative tasks can have a valuable role to play in cultivating inclusivity and the appreciation of difference among course participants.

7.7.4 Contextually Situated, Reflective Learning

The arts-inspired tasks also meet the criteria for CICP in their contextually grounded nature and their ability to foster reflection. The collages in particular can be said to represent students' artistic linking of an abstract concept with their own social worlds, thereby fostering students' consciousness of themselves and their knowledge as contextually situated (Osei-Kofi, 2013). Specifically, the tasks served to challenge ideas of culture as fixed or knowable and demonstrate that conceptions of competence can vary greatly depending on the positionalities, epistemologies and values of those considering them. In encouraging students to move away from an instrumental approach to the study of IC towards more experiential, contextual and reflexive learning, the tasks are well placed to contribute CICP.

While carrying out the tasks themselves, it was shown that participants used them to develop and clarify their own positions, thereby strengthening the connection between personal experience and knowledge (see section 6.2). Anne, for example, felt that she knew more about herself and her position as a result of making the collages (Anne, IP2) and Marie grew in confidence about her own "emotional" approach to the subject matter and able to critique the assumptions of intercultural communication scholars (Marie, IP2: 18-19). Such comments demonstrate that the tasks embodied great potential for developing reflexivity, which Blasco (2012) notes has gained prominence in intercultural education as the focus has shifted towards more integrated and transformative approaches to pedagogy.

However, introspection and self-monitoring have their limits, and some forms of reflection in intercultural education can serve to solidify students' own standpoints or reify cultural stereotypes "if answers are sought within the self alone" (Blasco, 2012: 485). This perspective connects with Thayer-Bacon's (2000) conception of constructive thinking, which views communication with others as essential for helping us become aware of our own biases and the limits of our own perspectives in self-reflective and self-critical thinking. This, she argues, is facilitated by caring relationships which, in line with the discussion in previous

sections, involves respecting difference and alternative points of view (Thayer-Bacon, 2000). Thus, although the tasks were valuable in helping students to formulate their own positions, it was also important that they simultaneously encouraged students to keep these open and subject to change as a result of interaction with others.

The arts-inspired tasks were shown to foster this relational reflexivity in a number of ways. As participants drew comparisons and made connections with scholarly literature and/or others' work, many students such as Christophe, Sarah, Martin and Louise demonstrated a willingness to reflect critically on their own original approach and ideas. Reflexivity here was dialogical rather than resulting purely from introspection and engaging in this process in class can be argued to foster long-term reflexive capacities. These in turn can help students better assess their own understandings in the absence of the external criteria which are unavailable in unique, embodied intercultural encounters. Here, the focus is on long term personal development and a transformation of perspectives that comes about as a result of being in situations where one's own culturally situated understandings are challenged. These are arguably educational outcomes that demonstrate how arts-inspired tasks can make a valuable contribution to CICP. However, the critical dimension of CICP also demands that educators help students reflect upon the power relations and value systems they move in, and the ways they construct otherness (Phipps and Guilherme, 2004; Blasco, 2012; Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013; Sorrells, 2013). The tasks may not go far enough in developing this critical awareness as part of the reflective process, as will be discussed in sections 8.4.1 Implications for Pedagogy: Promising Potentials.

7.7.5 Arts-Inspired Tasks as Emancipatory Learning

The previous sections have argued that the arts-inspired tasks enabled many students find their own voice, allowing them to draw on their emotions, culture and life experiences to make meaning, helping them in turn to recognise that knowledge is contextual and contingent. The tasks were also shown to have fostered reflexivity, encouraging students to critically examine their own

perspectives in the light of alternatives. This section argues that this kind of learning can be considered emancipatory, as the knowledge gained through critical self-reflection allows students to call into question the status quo and reconsider the forces that have shaped our thinking, permitting the consideration of alternative options (Mezirow, 1991).

In this case study, the participants appreciated the opportunity to actively engage in creating conceptions that embodied their own understandings (see Chapter 5). Giving the students the task of making their own meanings validates their own experiences and ideas and functioned in many cases to help students create and value their own voice in the subject area, independent of established academic knowledge. This seemed to contrast with ways in which the students usually worked, with Marie, for example, commenting that term papers allow little scope for students to find their own voice:

> *I always think: so many students have written about the same topic before, and they all have it from the same scientists and it's always the same. It's just again and again. Even if the approaches might be a little bit different, it's still the same outcome.* (Marie, IP2: 24)

Additionally, the collaborative and reflective dimensions seemed to support the development of students who were able to modify their positions in light of the academic literature and their peers' ideas, without losing confidence in the validity of their own views. When both steps are taken together, it can be argued that the artistic tasks did, as Hulsbosch (2010) theorises, have the potential to develop students who are self-confident, self-aware, and open to constructive collaboration with those who are different. The arts-inspired tasks were just two activities in a semester-long course, and it cannot be claimed that all students found them empowering. However, participant comments in the interviews and evidence from the portfolios showed that many students did develop in confidence and reflexivity. As Lena commented, critical self-reflection on the contradictions between her reactions and the values espoused in her own work demonstrated that she was motivated to move past familiar and unquestioned perspectives to “always think again about certain ideas” (Lena, IP2: 4).

It is not only the individual who can benefit from the self-expression and self-actualisation that creative modes of working can foster, as increased student criticality and agency has the potential to effect positive change beyond the classroom (Carlile and Jordan, 2012). Empowering students who are better able to envision and enact the type of change in their communities that will work towards a more socially just world is a key goal of CP (Shor, 1996; Phipps and Gonzalez, 2004; Giroux, 2011; Darder et al., 2017). Although it is beyond the scope of this study to examine long-term effects of taking part in these tasks or the course as a whole, student feedback and portfolio entries suggest that creative, arts-inspired tasks can sow the seeds for development of this nature. Their incorporation can therefore be said to support and extend existing notions of CICP by providing methods to foster emancipatory learning that develops confident, critical and open-minded thinkers.

7.8 The Relationships between the Key Findings

These key findings are related to one another in certain ways and can be divided into three categories: key findings 3 and 5 deal with design considerations, key findings 1, 2 and 4 concern the creative processes and products, while key finding 6 represents the pedagogical potentials of the tasks for CICP. The relationships between them are depicted in Figure 7.2 below.

In order to best harness arts-inspired, creative work for learning, analysis showed that certain factors should be considered when designing the tasks. Firstly, the extent to which the tasks and the conditions enabled a balance of creative tensions (key finding 3) was found to have an impact on the degree to which the creative process was satisfying for participants. For example, offering students freedom within certain constraints appeared to foster the generation and connection of ideas. Secondly, collaborative and individual artistic tasks were shown to achieve different pedagogical goals (key finding 5), with the two ways of working impacting differently on learning both within the creative process and in subsequent engagement with the completed creative 'product'. For instance, working collaboratively to artistically express 'culture' allowed

students to draw on multiple voices to co-negotiate an emerging conception as part of the creative process, while creating individual 'intercultural competence' collages appeared to allow for more introspection and the preservation of individual perspectives when the completed work was subsequently shared.

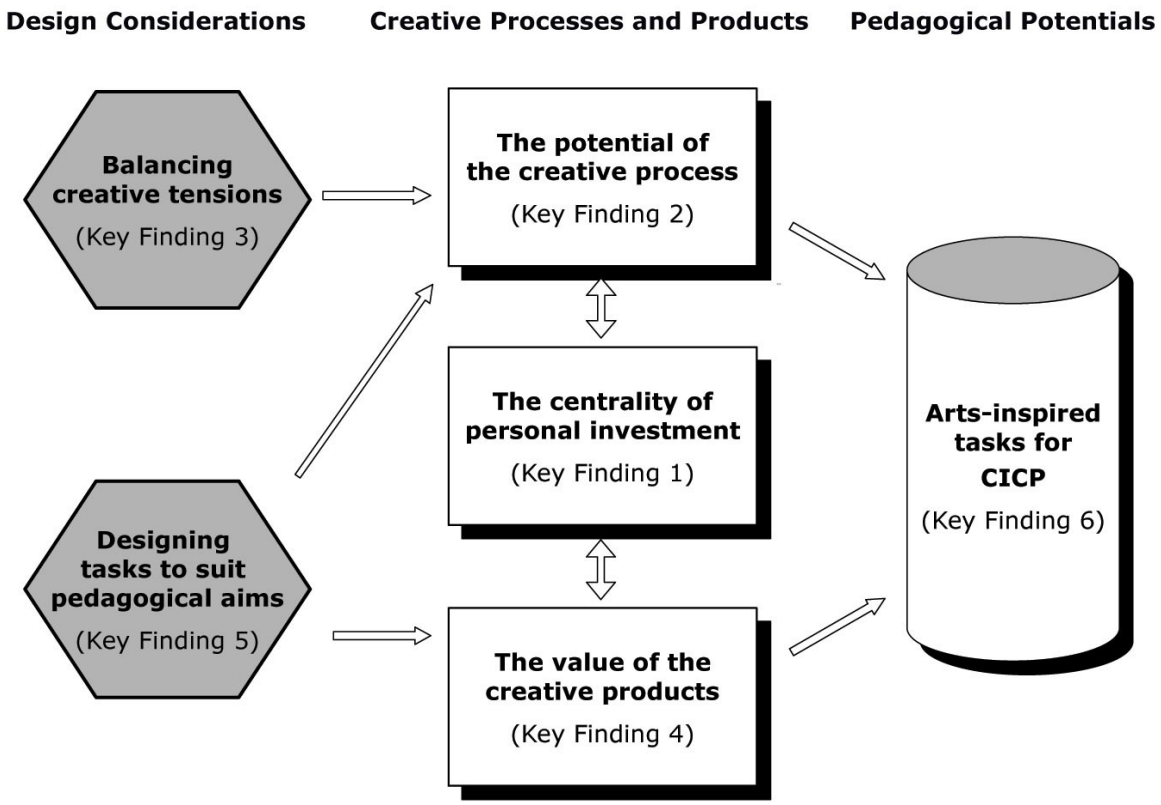

Figure 7.2: The relationships between the six key research findings

The centrality of personal investment (key finding 1) is positioned at the core of the model, highlighting its significance for learning both within the creative process and in further reflection on the creative products. The fact that both artistic tasks allowed students to draw on and express their personalities and personal knowledge was found to increase student engagement, fostering more natural communication and student inclusion in both the creative process and subsequent reflection on the outcomes. The resulting atmosphere of participation and more natural communication in turn appeared to encourage some participants to engage further, demonstrating the positive mutual impact between personal investment and the value of the creative process/creative product.

Finally, the figure indicates that participation in the creative process (key finding 2) and engagement with the creative products (key finding 4) can translate into learning outcomes that are valuable for CICP (key finding 6). For example, participation in unusual, artistic tasks is positioned as fostering a tolerance of ambiguity and an inquiry stance that is valuable when forging intercultural relationships (Sobré-Denton and Bardhan, 2013). Figure 8.1 in the following chapter shows in more detail how working on the arts-inspired tasks demonstrated the potential to translate into CICP.

7.9 Summary of Chapter 7

This chapter has discussed how the arts-inspired, creative tasks were viewed by participants as valuable for learning and argues that the tasks can make a valuable contribution to CICP, thereby extending its conception. It has presented six key findings emerging from the research. Key findings 1, 2 and 4 concerned the value of engaging in creative tasks for students, with the investment of personal elements proving a significant motivating factor, the creative process serving to generate ideas and personally meaningful conceptions, and the creative products themselves emerging as important for fostering reflexivity and constructive thinking. Key findings 3 and 5 deal with the factors that emerged as significant when considering the design of the tasks: the third key finding revealed how a range of tensions should be balanced for students to benefit most from the tasks while the fifth demonstrated that the collaborative and individual tasks brought distinct advantages and disadvantages and can therefore be selected according to pedagogical priorities. Key finding 6 built on these findings to demonstrate the ways in which the tasks can be considered valuable for CICP specifically. In particular, it is argued that the artistic tasks helped students deal with ambiguity and take risks, developed the ability to understand other perspectives, were inclusive and encouraged students to view diversity as an asset, encouraged reflexivity, and that the tasks can therefore be viewed as embodying emancipatory potential.

CICP literature has yet to realise the potential of artistic ways of working in an IC university seminar room, but the field is expanding and developing to include

a wide variety of approaches for different purposes and contexts. It would seem that creative, arts-inspired tasks offer great potential for learning, although (as discussed in the following chapter) the tasks employed in this study could have been conceived in ways that would go further to highlight systemic injustices, as CICP demands (Halualani, 2011; Sorrells, 2013; Sobré, 2017). All in all, working on the arts-inspired, creative tasks designed for this study was found to be highly valuable as part of CICP, offering valuable new insights into the ways in which such pedagogy can be designed.

The next and final chapter concludes this thesis, highlighting its contribution to knowledge and reconsidering the findings with particular focus on the cultural context in which the study was carried out. The chapter also considers the implications of the research, its limitations, and recommendations for future research. I end this thesis with my personal reflections and some final thoughts about the study.

I N T E R L U D E

Laura's Speech

Let me assume that all of us here have one thing in common: We are all participating in a Bachelor programme at university. Aiming for more or less the same goal, that is, receiving a reasonable degree that gives us, as a welcome gift, a free ride on the *working-life-rollercoaster*. Some of us are forced to first become a master in what we are doing here to further get the permission to pass through to the queue in front of the ticket shop. A *queue* – the epitome of humans submitting themselves to expectations of their environment. One after another; one by one; step by step; structure.

Sounds boring, doesn't it? That's not for the faint-hearted, not for the impatient; not for those who gave their everything to be *first* in line and failed to be so. And what would happen then, standing there queuing... bored and impatient. What a bummer you forgot your mobile phone at home, not being able to check how much of your precious time you already wasted waiting in line for a ride that might not even be suited for you, eventually making you feel sick..!

You decide to turn around to get a sneak peek at the faces of those standing behind you. Some seem to share the same mood of sweet disappointment. Suddenly though, you recognise something astonishing. Further back in the queue you actually see people looking a bit older than you cheerfully talking, hearty laughing, happily relaxed. How come they seem so satisfied? They must have been queuing for ages – they look like 30 or even older!

Wondering what they're talking about, you try to eavesdrop a little. To summarise what you hear can be described by one word: *experience*. Experience of taking *wrong turns* on the decision-making highway. Experience of discovering one's *area of interest* and the *willingness to become passionate* about it. Experience of being *patient* with *oneself* and with the process of finding the 'right' path that leads to the 'right' queue. Experience of queuing in the 'wrong' line several times. The experience of learning and reflecting on one's decisions, taking into consideration one's personal pleasure, motivation, and ambition to complete a certain task.

What is it, the *origin of stress and tension* that you feel about completing one

level after another as quick as possible in the *game called life*? What is it, that keeps you running and running against a wall? What is it, the urge to not break the whole thing off although you're far from feeling comfortable? How about if we *press pause* for a while and smile. Allowing ourselves a big grin as we realise that most of the pressure we put on ourselves is built from *the outside*. But we are our own masters and *we*, living on this place on earth, *can* and *should* embrace this opportunity. Now.

Who told you to go to university right after graduating from high school? *Who* told you to finish the degree you once started although you realise there is not too much you feel passionate about? *Who* told you you need to be working by the age of 25, getting married and having kids by the time you turn 30? And *who* told you to put some thought into all of this? Was it you?

(Laura, portfolio entry)

I N T E R L U D E

Participatory Practitioner Research and Power Relations

In chapter 4 I outlined the different conceptions of practitioner research that informed this study and explained that I had originally designed it as a Participatory Action Research project. Inspired by other projects described in the literature, I very much wanted everyone who chose to participate to have an input into how things would be done and what would be researched, with the participants also collaborating in drawing tentative interpretations. Less than a month after I outlined these plans in my application for ethical approval, I started to recognise the challenges in this approach, writing in May 2015:

> If I want the students to be participating in this research design – does this not mean that I'm going to have a problem planning data collection methods? I'm just thinking of the practicalities of getting the students involved when the semester is as short as it is. Can I come up with the methods and just let them carry out the tasks and still call it participatory if they then further reflect on their work and make meaning in follow-up activities?

As it turned out, I wouldn't have time to get students at all involved in the analysis of their words and artistic work either. I had wanted to foreground my students' voices rather than my own but it just wasn't possible given the amount of time I needed to get to grips with the data myself, the processes of analysis I chose, and the demands I would have had to make on students over the course of one semester.

Over time, I found myself moving away from any one particular conception of practitioner research, bricolaging my own approach in an attempt to translate my ethical pedagogical principles into a research process that was right for the context and the individual students. Although I was disappointed that I couldn't involve the participants in the research design or interpretation and initially viewed this as an ethical failing, I came to see it differently once the semester was underway and students began expressing in interview the time pressure they experienced. Instead of viewing their limited participation as a weakness, I began to feel that asking them to give up more time to become further involved would have constituted an abuse of my power as the course teacher. I also wondered whether the idea of asking them to co-design the artistic tasks had in fact partly been a cover for my own lack of inspiration at

the time, or even an attempt to absolve myself of responsibility for the quality of the tasks. And finally, I was aware that the research results would constitute a thesis with only my name to it, and that the rewards of completing it would be mine alone. It was therefore up to me to put the work in.

Whether or not I made the right decisions under the circumstances is something I continue to reflect on. Perhaps I did just take the least complicated path, or underestimate the students' capabilities and willingness to be involved. I think that a more flexible approach that allowed some students to participate more fully would have been possible, but overall, I feel that insisting on a more participatory research method could well have constituted an exploitative move.

Chapter 8 | Conclusion

8.1 Introduction to Chapter 8

The final chapter of this thesis critically discusses the findings of the study and their potential implications for practice. Although this thesis was originally born of a desire to better understand and enhance my own pedagogy, the findings offer new insights into the pedagogical potential of employing artistic tasks for CICP in settings beyond my classroom context. The study's contribution to knowledge is synthesised in section 8.2. Equally though, it became increasingly apparent that the social context of the research setting, at both micro and macro levels, had a significant impact on the findings. Thus, section 8.3 reconsiders the findings in the light of the most relevant characteristics of the research setting. With the impact of these contextual factors in mind, section 8.4 discusses implications for practice that arise from the research, firstly within the seminar room and secondly with regard to the wider culture of the university. Section 8.5 considers the research limitations, while section 8.6 presents suggestions for future inquiry. Carrying out this research has had a significant impact on my professional practice and allowed me to shape a new researcher identity and so in section 8.7 I briefly reflect on this PhD journey. Section 8.8 offers some final comments that bring this chapter, and the thesis, to a close.

8.2 Contribution to Knowledge

The contribution to knowledge made by this thesis is two-fold and presented here in two subsections. Firstly, I outline how the research extends discussion about the value of creative, artistic practices for undergraduate education, offering insight into (a) the ways arts-inspired tasks can foster the generation of insightful, personally meaningful knowledge and (b) the conditions that can enhance this process. Secondly, I argue that findings show how arts-inspired, creative tasks can represent a valuable pragmatic application of CICP in HE: while scholarship in intercultural education has long recognised the benefits of artistic ways of working in, for example, community settings or primary

education, to date there is little scholarship that shows how the potentials of artistic ways of working can be harnessed with undergraduate students studying IC.

8.2.1 The Value of Creative, Artistic Practices in HE

Although my primary research aim was to identify the potential of the arts-inspired tasks for CICP specifically, participants indicated that they were generally enthusiastic about working on the tasks for reasons that seemed, initially, only indirectly connected to their intended purpose. This interview data led me to pay closer attention to students' perceptions and experiences of the creative process in both collaborative and individual work, with results that have implications for pedagogical practice beyond CICP. Findings support James and Brookfield's (2014) claim that arts-inspired, creative tasks can increase student engagement and encourage reflective thinking but also provide further insight into the reasons why they can be so effective in this respect, potentially fulfilling, for example, a need for relatedness.

The first key finding concerned the participants' personal investment in their learning and highlighted the motivating nature of artistic tasks which are carried out collaboratively or shared on completion. Here, self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000; La Guardia and Ryan, 2002) proved useful in understanding the connection between motivation and the desire for relatedness that the tasks were often able to capitalise upon, increasing participation and an atmosphere of inclusion in our intercultural classroom.

Secondly, the importance of the creative process for enabling students to generate ideas and personally meaningful conceptions, either alone or in groups, emerged in the research findings. Previous research carried out by Sullivan (2005), Simmons and Daley (2013) and Chilton and Scotti (2014) found that engaging in artistic processes can be considered a valauble method of inquiry for researchers. This thesis demonstrates that the artistic processes of discovery they describe can also generate understanding for students in an undergraduate seminar room. Working visually was found to have particular advantages in that

it allowed students to overcome the limitations of language, resist the linearity usually required in academic work, and harness multiple ways of knowing, including the sensory and emotional. Despite the fact that such ways of creating knowledge are often considered anti-intellectual in HE, I argue that the participants' work attests to value of artistic processes for generating insightful, thoughtful and plural conceptions of 'culture' and 'intercultural competence'.

Next, the data also shed new light on the tensions that needed to be balanced in order that participants could best engage with and benefit from the tasks. Although the unique preferences of individual participants should be acknowledged, the data suggested that:

- the artistic process and the artistic product were not necessarily separable and did not require one to be privileged over the other
- creativity flourished when freedom was balanced with certain constraints
- risk-taking was more likely in non-judgmental environments
- creative tasks were most satisfying when relaxation and intensification in learning occurred simultaneously, reflecting students' enjoyment of tasks that were challenging but accessible.

This new set of dialectical tensions draws on theories generated by a number of creativity scholars such as Csikszentmihalyi (1997), Wang (2001) and DiYanni (2016) and offers useful insight for educators when trying to create the optimal conditions for artistic work within a traditional class-space.

Fourthly, analysis suggested that participants' creative 'products' should not necessarily be viewed as 'end products' but rather as artefacts that open up further possibilities for learning. Rather than representing innovative, novel artefacts of benefit to society, the value of the collages and posters was found to lie their ability to stimulate continued reflection and learning. This was particularly the case when personal knowledge generated in the process of creation was brought into connection with scholarly literature on the same theme or ideas expressed in other students' creative work. While the creative 'products' did serve to stabilise ideas, as visual, non-linear representations they also allowed room for meanings to shift or concepts to be extended as a result of

further reflection. From this perspective, it can be argued that the distinction commonly made in the literature between process-focussed and product-focussed views of creativity is not always helpful.

Finally, analysis allowed a useful direct comparison of the advantages and limitations of working on artistic tasks individually and collaboratively that I have not encountered in the literature. In particular, it was found that the individual collaging task often encouraged more spontaneity and maintained the diversity in perspectives, while the group poster task appeared less 'risky' to students and harnessed diversity for the collaborative creation of a common consensus. Although neither task proved infallible, the collaborative task functioned particularly well to build community among the individual groups while the individual task seemed to better allow students to position themselves as individuals and appreciate diversity in perspectives.

8.2.2 The Value of the Tasks for CICP

To return to my original, over-arching research question, and drawing heavily on the findings outlined above, I argue that this study expands notions of CICP by demonstrating how both collaborative and individual arts-inspired tasks can be considered a valuable pragmatic application of this pedagogy in HE. In CICP literature to date, there exist many examples of engaging, innovative, language-based practice within university seminar rooms, such as the use of ethnoautobiography (Mendoza, 2017) and simulations that encourage students to consider the role of power in everyday interactions (Halualani, 2011). However, the potential of working in arts-inspired ways appears not yet to have been explored by scholars in this field. This is perhaps surprising given that arts-based ways of working for intercultural education appear well-established outside HE seminar rooms, particularly in community projects, and that the arts have long been viewed as cultivating critical reflection, consciousness-raising and a sense of agency (see, for example, Greene, 1995; UNESCO, 2006; Osei-Kofi, 2013). It is perhaps indicative of this gap that of the three examples of CICP that Sobré (2017) discusses, only her example of CICP in a university setting does not involve the creation of artwork in some form: the two CICP community projects

aimed at underserved youth that she presents do incorporate artistic elements into their educational programmes.

Indeed, Axtmann's (2002) book chapter *Transcultural Performance in Classroom Learning*, which details six practice activities for "transcultural performance" remains one of the only examples of an exploration of arts-inspired tasks for IC in HE. While Axtmann's work is inspiring, this thesis is able to offer a deeper analysis by examining in greater detail the impact of two activities from both my own and the participants' perspectives and considering their value specifically for CICP. Figure 8.1 shows how the benefits of engaging in arts-inspired tasks identified in this study can translate into valuable learning according to criteria identified by CICP scholars, including critical notions of cosmopolitanism and "intercultural praxis" (Sorrells, 2013). In particular, I argue that the artistic tasks had the potential to encourage students to deal with ambiguity and take risks, cultivate an open attitude, view difference as asset rather than a barrier, and further develop the capacity to critically reflect on their own views and attitudes.

Findings also show how artistic tasks can validate student voices and nurture agency, helping students appreciate the importance of their own ideas and experience in the face of scholarly literature. No guarantees exist that all or even any of these potentials can be achieved, but if students are willing and the conditions are favourable, I propose that arts-inspired tasks have a valuable role to play in accomplishing a more critical IC pedagogy. By extending CICP to encompass arts-inspired learning tasks in an HE class-space, this thesis both acknowledges that critical awareness requires individuals to engage in personal reflection, dialogue and solidarity (Darder, 2017) and answers Halualani's (2017) call for those taking a more critical approach to IC pedagogy to develop concrete ways to counter the troubling dominance of the instrumental and skills-based approach to IC pedagogy. Drawing on the findings discussed in Chapter 7, Figure 8.1 presents the advantages of working in arts-inspired ways identified by this study and details how these can translate into learning that is valuable for CICP.

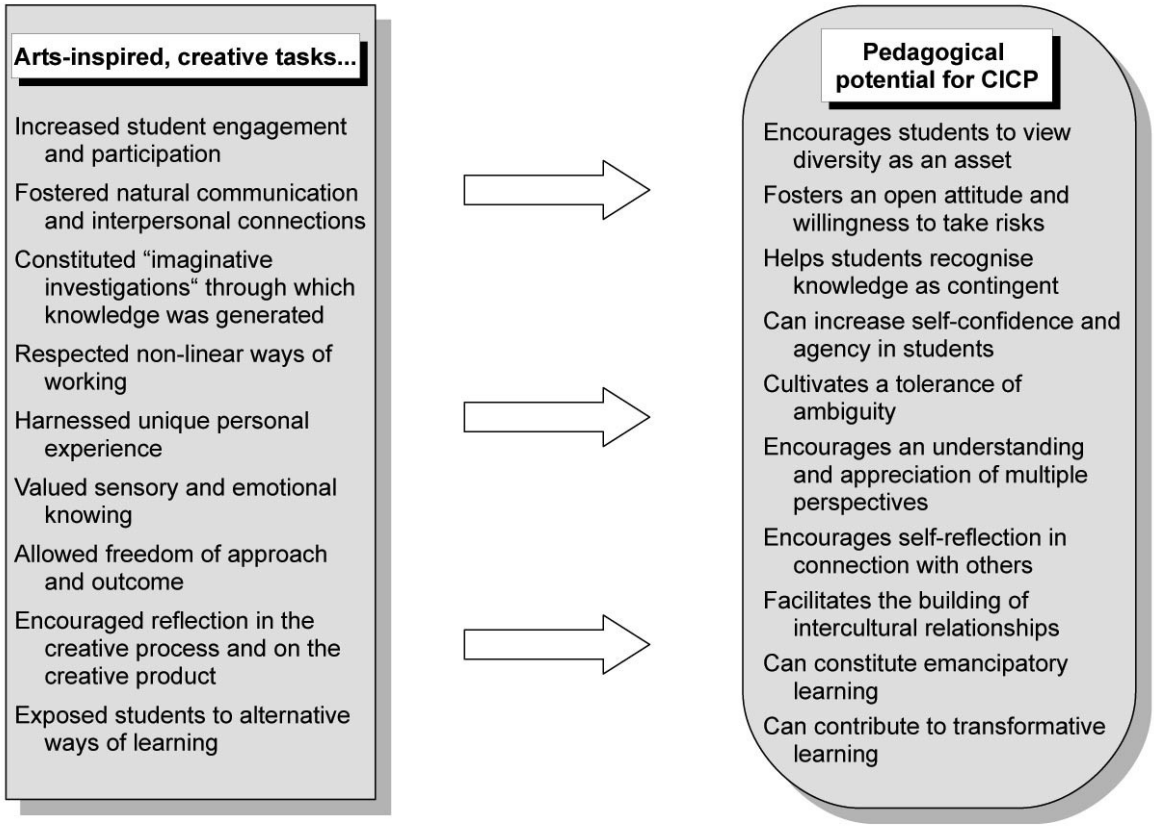

Figure 8.1: Pedagogical potential for CICP of arts-inspired, creative tasks, developed from the data

Critical pedagogy, a key influence on conceptions of CICP, has been described as "a transgressive discourse [and] practice" (Steinberg, 2007: ix). The arts-inspired appeared to have contributed to this discourse by offering the participants in this study other ways to approach their learning. These tasks can therefore provide a transgressive counter-narrative to common-sense ideas about the creation and expression of knowledge that many participants viewed as dominating their studies, demonstrating that academic modes of learning do not need to be disembodied, text-based, or subject to top-down content standards. In addition, I believe that the tasks played a valuable part in disrupting the traditional teacher/student hierarchy and helping students recognise their own agency in the seminar room. Immersing undergraduate students, many of whom are studying to become teachers themselves, in explorative, artistic learning experiences would therefore also appear to represent a valuable way of advancing principles of CP in this context.

8.3 Reconsidering the Findings in Light of the Case Context

While carrying out the study, I was acutely aware that participants' experiences and meanings were mediated by systemic and more micro contextual factors that went beyond the individual, also shaping my own reading of their views. As the knowledge generated in this thesis is context-dependent, I believe that a fuller understanding of the findings and the implications of the research can be achieved if they are reconsidered in light of the case context, as outlined in Chapter 3. Teaching and researching aspects of the IC course within one of the largest universities in Germany presented interesting tensions and challenges and this section therefore discusses the effects and interplay between three contextual factors that emerged as most impactful. These were: student experiences of the course as a whole, the lack of mandatory attendance for students studying under time pressure, and the absence of summative assessment within a traditional, standards-driven environment.

Firstly, it seems important to consider the two artistic tasks as part of the wider IC course, described in Chapter 3. Although there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that participating in these tasks alone constituted learning that was transformative, the tasks were viewed as integral parts of a course that could indeed be considered transformative for some students. For example, individual participants reported in reflective portfolios or personal email correspondence that participation in the course had triggered changes to their identity, their personal goals, their intended course of study, or the nature of close relationships. Given the findings outlined in Chapter 5 in particular, it is likely that participation in the artistic tasks contributed to such course outcomes for these participants. However, it also seems likely that an overall positive experience of the course had an impact on participants' attitudes towards the artistic tasks both in class and in the research interviews that followed.

In the research interviews, the issue of regular attendance in class also emerged as relevant. As explained in Chapter 3, a 2014 change in the *Hochschulgesetz NRW* (Higher Education Act of NRW) decreed that attendance in class could not

be made mandatory and students were therefore entitled to obtain course credit without regularly attending class. Two participants noted that the biggest barrier to effective group building and collaboration had been the lack of regular attendance by their group members, and these two participants themselves missed a large number of classes. Failure to attend regularly was not attributed to lack of interest in the course, but rather perceived time pressure and a necessity to prioritise paid employment or academic work for other courses, especially those ending in high stakes end-of-semester examinations. Numerous comments made by participants in interview attest to the time constraints that students experienced and are representative of comments made in informal conversations I have with students in other contexts. For example, Peter, who had just applied to study abroad for a year, felt that he would "lose a lot of time" as a result (IP2: 5), and Laura felt that she did not have time to fulfil the workload of each course (IP1). Elif said:

> *I thought that university would give you the opportunity to do what you like and what you're interested in, but you don't really have time to do any of it because the focus is just on the grades, to get through the courses and everything […]. I have to get through Latin [...] while studying Biology, while studying English, while studying Education. I just don't have time to do any of it: it seems like I can't make any progress.* (Elif, IP1: 10-11)

With students under pressure to both complete their studies within the six semesters advised for a bachelor's degree and also leave university with high grades, it is unsurprising that some felt the need to prioritise courses that ended in high stakes examinations. Time pressure was keenly felt by participants such as Helena and Ronja who worked part-time or, like Martin and Klara, had long commutes to university. Some participants studying at the university on exchange programmes also felt under pressure to pick up a high number of credit points, although this varied greatly. However, all in all, while some students such as Caroline felt forced to miss class in order to study for a different course, many more students regularly attended than did not. Indeed, participant feedback indicated that many of the students who attended each

week were particularly motivated to be there by the opportunity for personal exploration and intercultural dialogue that was created at the expense of a focus on examinable content. For these participants, I would argue that the course, and in particular the artistic tasks, had the potential to reconnect students with their learning and counteract the sense of alienation or lack of autonomy some seemed to feel.

Thus, I would argue that the absence of an examination in this course was vital for encouraging the kind of reflective and personal learning that the creative, arts-inspired tasks enabled, despite the fact that some participants did not regularly come to class on the grounds that time was limited and studying for graded courses took priority. As can be seen in section 5.2.6, many participants appreciated the freedom that came with working in ways that would not be judged and the students knew that their performance in the course as a whole would not be graded. Instead, in most cases, the reflective course portfolios demonstrated how students grappled with difficult questions and developed intellectually and personally over the course of the semester, also helping me discover and assess the outcomes and effects of the activities they were given. In many cases there was evidence that students further developed intercultural awareness and sensitivity, but, like Borghetti (2017), I would argue for the importance of *not* assessing this development. Borghetti argues that intercultural competence can be considered a value, like compassion and empathy, and that teaching but not attempting to measure it demonstrates to students that not all learning that is valuable must be assessed. It also seems possible that grading performance in the course could negatively affect participants' openness to the artistic tasks. Were the course to have ended in, for example, a standardised examination of the concepts and theory of IC, it is conceivable that some of the participants who welcomed the tasks would instead consider them a waste of time that could be better spent on work directly relevant to the examination.

8.4 Research Implications

This section considers some of the implications of the research and is divided

into two subsections. The first addresses the significance of this study for practitioners, while the second considers implications beyond the seminar room.

8.4.1 Implications for Pedagogy: Promising Potentials

Given the research findings, I would certainly encourage HE practitioners to consider using artistic tasks in their IC courses. However, it is not my aim to present two tasks that others should copy or generalizable knowledge that can be directly applied beyond the context of this case. Instead, my hope for this thesis is that the research proves useful and generative, also offering readers insights into and connections with their own situations in a process of intersubjective understanding (Thomas and Myers, 2015). Like Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009), I believe that knowledge generated at the local level of teaching practice frequently interacts with global concerns and is useful in a far wider range of contexts. For my own practice, the research findings gave me confidence in the value of the arts-inspired tasks for CICP in undergraduate studies and a better understanding of some of the pitfalls of the tasks and challenges that students may experience. When using artistic tasks in subsequent IC courses, I found it particularly useful to bear in mind the emerging set of dialectical tensions in the creative process (key finding 3). For example, where previously I had considered limited class time a hindrance to the creative process, I now see that it can function for many as a productive constraint. My attitude towards the 'end products' of students' creative work has also significantly shifted now that I better recognise their potential to stimulate reflection, dialogue and further modification of the ideas they represent.

Although analysis indicated the value of the artistic tasks, they also revealed themselves as limited, particularly with regard to the extent to which they encouraged students to uncover unequal relations of power and highlight structural injustices, a key feature of CICP (Halualani, 2011; Sorrells, 2013; Sobré, 2017). I believe that the artistic tasks can be redesigned to better these issues. Practitioners, myself included, could, for example, create artistic tasks that ask students to reflect on the ways in which their identities are constructed and affect the knowledge they acquire, or the ways in which social injustice

manifests itself in their communities. Although not part of the present study, in a subsequent IC class I gave students the task of creating and sharing collages on the topic of 'exclusion' in intercultural settings, which appeared to foster thoughtful consideration of structural injustice.

Furthermore, more could be done to encourage students to reflect on their learning, considering the changes they are making to their own perspectives in light of working on creative tasks, or how their intercultural learning could translate into individual or collective action. Particularly when communication around the creative tasks failed to live up to expectations, findings do not demonstrate that participants were always able to turn a sense of failure into a source of further dialogue and learning through self-reflexivity, as Toyosaki and Chuang (2017) urge. Mandating self-reflection may not offer the solution, since it can be perceived by students as a form surveillance and/or lead them to provide exaggerated accounts of personal transformation if they feel that their own experiences do not live up to expectations (James and Brookfield, 2014). However, modelling reflexivity as the course teacher, perhaps making one's own course journal available to students on a week-to-week basis, may well increase students' willingness to provide honest accounts and use the opportunity to reflect more deeply on their learning. Focussing on creating community in small groups and as a whole class at the beginning of the course may helpfully limit communication problems later, but, ultimately, the challenges that IC can present should be treated as valuable sources for learning rather than entirely avoided.

In this case study, the course members were highly heterogenous, also encompassing students from other departments and those studying on exchange programmes. This diversity proved an enormous asset and enabled experiential intercultural learning in class. In order to create a diverse course membership, each semester I took measures such as advertising the class in meetings for exchange students and asking colleagues in the faculty's International Office to promote my course. Such measures may not be possible in other contexts. However, one possible advantage of a more homogenous group could be that the knowledge and intercultural experience of the students is better known to the

teacher who can therefore, for example, design tasks that require all students to develop novel ideas rather than reproduce those found in the literature.

While I believe that artistic work can be used in a university seminar room as part of a critically-oriented IC course, there are no guarantees that there will not be resistance from students. The outcomes of the activities themselves are also inherently unpredictable due to their creative, experimental nature. Each setting and constellation of course members is unique and contextual factors inevitably influence students' attitudes to working on arts-inspired tasks. For example, a class climate in which students felt safe to experiment and free of judgement was found to be important for the creative process and this may not always be possible to create. Furthermore, although it can be claimed that participants in this case study were generally open to the tasks and welcomed artistic ways of working as break from the norm, findings also testify to the degree to which opinions differed. Moreover, it is not always unproblematic to move from a tried and tested instrumental approach to IC pedagogy to more 'risky' ways of working that may place the teacher at greater risk of dissatisfied students, especially if he or she is working in a climate in which student feedback can affect career progression.

Nevertheless, the findings from this research show that students often do welcome different, non-traditional ways of working, perhaps even more so in traditional learning environments. The challenge for educators may be to assist *all* students in surfacing and elaborating their tacit knowledge in the creative process. In this respect, I believe that it can be helpful to make explicit the rationale for employing arts-inspired tasks, stressing that students' creations do not need to communicate an unambiguous message and will not be judged. The findings of this study also showed that advance planning inhibited the development of ideas in both individual and group work and so it would likely be advisable to encourage students to work spontaneously, building on ideas and connections that emerge in the creative process. More generally though, I share James and Brookfield's (2014) view that educators can do much to encourage an openness to risk-taking, experimentation and alternative pedagogical practices by modelling this openness themselves.

Lastly, collaborating with students as part of the research appeared to have a positive impact on the atmosphere in the seminar room. Although for ethical reasons I endeavoured to separate participation in the research process from participation in the course (see Chapter 4), the inquiry became part of the educational experience for the participants and changed the nature of my relationship with many of them, challenging the usual hierarchical positioning of teacher and student. Carrying out research interviews with students is of course time-consuming, but the positive effects for students of engaging in the research process suggest that it would be beneficial to incorporate some elements of collaborative reflection on creative activities into IC courses.

8.4.2 Implications Beyond the Seminar Room: Practitioner Networks and Cultural Change

Given the ability of creative, arts-inspired tasks to engage students, help them generate ideas, build community and provide further opportunities for reflection, it would seem likely that they are valuable beyond IC pedagogy. While the use of such tasks should not be mandated, the creation within a particular institution of an interdisciplinary network of practitioners who share a common interest in working in artistic ways could enable the continuation and development of this practice. Such a network could provide practitioners with continuity in collegial support within a specific educational context and a place to discuss and evaluate their use of artistic tasks. This could also serve to promote educational goals oriented around the development of critical, reflective, self-actualised students. As Hanson (2014) has pointed out, the last two decades in HE have seen a focus on documenting cognitive development and formulating learning outcomes centred on skills and knowledge at the expense of a consideration of identity development. In the university in which this research was carried out, the concept of Constructive Alignment (Biggs, 2003) is positioned as a basic tenet of well-designed courses, with particular focus on the development of clearly articulated and measurable learning outcomes. This is no doubt useful in many cases, but, as Eisner (2005) and Addison (2014) have argued, this approach fails to recognise the value of teaching and learning that is creative, emergent and unmeasurable. Constructive Alignment also overlooks

the unpredictable, non-linear and unique ways in which students develop as individuals over the course of their higher education. Thus, the creation of an interdisciplinary network of practitioners who are interested in harnessing creative teaching and learning for the personal and academic development of students could also contribute to a counter-narrative to the common wisdom and provide greater balance in the conversation about the goals of HE. Like Simons and Hicks (2006) and James and Brookfield (2014), I believe that HE should embrace alternative ways of learning that are more accessible to those who have traditionally felt excluded, and that these ways can also be of benefit to all students in their personal development.

Another recommendation concerns the research setting but could be extended to other contexts where relevant. As detailed in section 8.3, the research also shed light on the impact of placing students under pressure to complete their studies within a certain time period, while simultaneously removing the requirement for students to be physically present in seminars. There was a clear mismatch between the ways in which the participants in this study felt that they best learned (in class, in collaboration with others, through critical reflection, and in a non-judgmental environment, as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6) and the learning choices some of them made in order to perform well in graded examinations and complete their degrees within as few semesters as possible. Unsurprisingly, student portfolios and, to a lesser extent, research interviews, demonstrate that those students who did not regularly attend class benefited the least from the course, while those who attended regularly and also worked in groups whose participants all attended regularly were more likely to find the course transformative. Rather than mandating attendance across the board, which has been shown to disadvantage students who commute to university, are carers, or do paid work alongside their studies, it would seem advisable to (re)create a climate in which students do not feel under such pressure to complete their studies within six semesters and could therefore take fewer courses per semester which they are able to attend regularly. This, however, would require systemic change, necessitating, for example, changes to the financial support system (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz/BAföG)* which currently only ensures support for students for the standard period of study.

8.5 Research Limitations

Although this study was carefully considered and I believe it has made a valuable contribution to knowledge, it is inevitably limited in some ways. The first shortcoming concerns the research interviews, through which the vast majority of data were collected. Although I believe that the interviews were conducted in line with the ethical concerns detailed in Chapter 4, I also feel that conversing with participants in my first language (English) rather than theirs (a variety of other languages) in some cases placed an extra burden on them and reinforced the teacher/student hierarchy. Additionally, for practical reasons outlined in Chapter 4, I was not able to check my initial interpretations of the data with the participants in further interviews as I originally planned, and the research therefore involved a lesser degree of collaboration than intended. Furthermore, I also took the decision not to press participants to explain their artistic work. This is firstly because I was anxious to avoid research interviews being misconstrued as a covert form of oral examination, secondly because I believed that students' visual work would in some cases have been inexplicable, especially in a foreign language, and thirdly because I did not intend to examine the collages and posters thematically. As a result, even though all participants discussed the work they created, the data emerging from some participants is limited with regard to the specific ideas generated. However, these limitations were either unavoidable or arose from considered choices, and the data gathered were nevertheless wide-ranging and enlightening.

Compromises also had to be made with regard to the scope of the data considered in analysis. For example, while this research gives significant space to unintended discoveries, it was not possible to fully connect students' perceptions of the artistic tasks with the considerable range of wider, contextual factors that emerged as significant. Additionally, in seeking to develop themes that facilitated an in-depth analysis of the views of 24 research participants, I feel that the experiences of the individual students, in all their particularity, have somewhat slipped out of view. However, my wider knowledge of the case and of the participants themselves usefully informed data analysis. Ultimately, I

consider the resulting findings useful to others in this form, while a closer examination of the perspectives of participants such as Yuwei and Martin (e.g. in sections 6.3.4 and 7.3.2) aimed to provide insight into singular cases.

8.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Both the results of this study and the process of inquiry revealed opportunities for continued research. Two recommendations for future inquiry are located within CICP specifically, while another implies a broader examination of systemic temporal constraints that have an impact upon student experiences of university education.

The first recommendation concerns the assessment of learning in critically-oriented IC courses in HE. It would be useful to consider the value of reflective course portfolios for learning in CICP since little research currentlyin this area exists. Research questions could include:

- To what extent does the portfolio foster and evidence reflexivity and the generation of critical insights?
- What should the portfolio encompass, and who should decide?
- Can/should they be used as the basis for course assessment?

Lynch and Shaw (2005: 271) have examined issues of validity and ethics of portfolio assessment for master's degrees in foreign language teaching and maintain that the portfolio can be “a locus of self-creation”. Like this present examination of artistic ways of learning, a study of the potentials and challenges of portfolio assessment for CICP in HE (embracing questions of aims, reliability, power relations and ethics) would provide a valuable addition to the current body of scholarship.

Furthermore, a comparison of case studies across a variety of university settings would also likely shed further light on the benefits and limitations of employing artistic tasks for CICP. As section 8.3 highlights, I believe that the meanings participants made of their experiences were greatly influenced by contextual

factors beyond the tasks themselves and a comparison of findings would shed further light on the significance of these. For example, a similar study carried out in a setting encompassing compulsory attendance and graded summative assessment may produce quite different responses from students. Additionally, as suggested in section 8.4.1, I believe the artistic tasks could be redesigned to more directly address the goals of CICP and deal more explicitly with issues of power, positionality and representation. A study of the pedagogical impacts of amended tasks would also constitute further valuable critical research, as would longitudinal research that examined the specific impacts of engaging in a critically-oriented IC course.

The contextual issues that appeared likely to have influenced students' perceptions of the artistic tasks also merit deeper investigation. In particular, the impacts of temporal constraints on student attitudes to different modes of learning deserve greater attention than scope of this thesis allowed and represent an interesting avenue for future research. Hartmut Rosa, sociologist and co-editor of the journal *Time and Society,* has commented in the national student magazine *Zeit Campus* on the time pressure under which undergraduate students in Germany currently find themselves, which he views as stemming largely from Bologna reforms (see section 3.2 for more detail). Rosa (2016) claims that students in Germany are allowed sufficient time to learn course content, but that the time required for learning that is transformative is increasingly being eroded. Although not analysed in this thesis, this study identified temporal 'double binds' created for students as a result of conflicting messages about the purposes and priorities of undergraduate education. For the participants of the present study, temporal constraints to learning existed within a system that in most cases did not require students to be present in class, arguably encouraging the view that learning can only be assessed by measuring the extent to which students achieve pre-defined outcomes. This, in turn, was set against a background of “curricular accounting” (Dixon, 2009), within which participation in a course was represented by credit points which express workload (1 credit point represents between 25 and 30 hours of study) and are independent of course grades. Credit points preoccupied many of the participants of the present study, with Martin, for example, expressing his

annoyance at having to complete a portfolio, give a presentation with an accompanying handout and write a term paper for a course that only gave him four credit points. As he put it, “four credit points and so much work for nothing” (IP2: 2).

In the current climate, credit points can therefore perhaps be said to represent a commodification of students' time which encourages a quantitative view of learning. This view potentially prevents students pursuing their interests and alienates them from certain goals of HE such as their own identity development. There exists a significant amount of valuable theory and research to draw and build on, from Ben-Peretz and Bromme's (1990) *The Nature of Time in Schools: Theoretical concepts, practitioner perspectives* to Alhadeff-Jones' (2017) *Time and the Rhythms of Emancipatory Education*. Marx’s (1976) theory of commodification and time compression and Rosa's (2015) theory of social acceleration may also illuminate student experiences. The causes and impacts of perceived time constraints deserve further attention and can potentially shed light on students' experiences of learning.

8.7 Personal Reflections

In this penultimate section, I would like to offer some of my personal reflections on the research process and the resulting study. The years over which this research was carried out were ones of enormous professional and personal growth, but also of challenge. As with so much learning, the long-term personal impact of undertaking this research remains unclear, but here I attempt to take stock of my thoughts and development.

First of all, it is difficult to convey how motivated and excited I was when I started this study. I read enthusiastically and widely across a multitude of methodologies and social theory and felt as if a new world had been opened up to me. This new world also brought with it a new language which I was eager to learn. Although I originally embarked on a doctorate with express intention of understanding and improving my own pedagogical praxis, I very quickly became excited by some of the creative and participatory methodological possibilities

available. Participating in a number of courses also greatly helped broaden my thinking and awareness of the wide variety of ways of approaching qualitative research. The National Centre for Research Methods course “Creative Approaches to Qualitative Researching” held in November 2016 in Manchester was particularly influential, drawing my attention to the possibilities of narrative research and facet methodology (Mason, 2011). Over time, a combination of practical considerations led me to adopt a more pragmatic 'bricolage' approach to answering my research questions and constructing this thesis. However, I do not consider the time I spent familiarising myself with other approaches by any means wasted. Ultimately, I hope to apply what I have learned in future research, whether that be formal or informal, and am excited about the possibilities.

Overall, the last few years working on this research have been transformative, increasing my confidence, knowledge and reflexivity as a researcher and practitioner. The sense of trepidation and vulnerability I felt on giving the students artistic tasks as part of their classwork, particularly in the early stages of the course when the 32 course members and I were only just becoming accustomed to one another, is documented in my researcher diary. Undertaking this study has helped me to dispel some of this insecurity and also accept that students' perspectives are often informed by factors that are entirely beyond my influence. I am also better able to defend the use of creative methods to colleagues, along with my stance towards pedagogy and the goals of HE. I do not think that my own positioning in this respect has shifted significantly, but I have developed a stronger professional voice as a result of carrying out this research.

I have also become substantially more aware of critical approaches in the field of IC and am now looking forward to seeing how my new knowledge will open up opportunities for learning in future courses, including the design of creative activities that can more fully address issues of inequality and social justice as part of CICP. It is worth acknowledging that the tasks set for students (and therefore the data collected for this study) reflect my own knowledge and positionality more than three years ago, while the analysis is considerably better informed and shaped by more recent publications. For example, although my

approach to the IC course was informed by critical pedagogy, CICP is a label I first encountered in 2017 (e.g. Sobré, 2017; Atay and Toyosaki, 2017). Also, while critical cosmopolitanism was a direction I had encountered in Holliday's (2011) writing, it was not one I had fully engaged with. It has been both enjoyable and enriching to explore the literature in more depth and to reflect on the various intersections between scholarship, this research, and my own shifting identity and life experiences. However, some feelings remain: I know that there are still uncomfortable gaps in my knowledge and I still hope to take bolder steps towards enacting critical pedagogical principles in my classrooms. Addressing these in order to play my part in contributing to wider change will require ethical intercultural thinking and what Phipps and Levine (2012: 232) describe as "a continued commitment to deep reflection and analysis, a continued critique of the status quo and a willingness to work carefully and with compassion". For example, while I hope that this study makes a valuable contribution to expanding notions of CICP for undergraduate education, I am conscious of the dangers of viewing my findings as providing definitive answers. As Dasli and Díaz warn:

> Saying […] that we already know what good intercultural […] pedagogy should look like not only leads back to the suppression of the other, but also cancels the kind of interminable questioning that each of us has to undertake as part of a necessary reflexive pedagogic praxis. (Dasli and Díaz, 2017c: 226)

8.8 Final Comments

While processes of globalisation have resulted in increasing interconnections across diverse communities, economic and political polices have combined to heighten inequality and intercultural tensions within and across communities (Sorrells, 2013). For example, we are seeing the highest ever levels of forcibly displaced people worldwide (UNHCR, 2019) and an increasing prevalence of nationalism in global politics (Bieber, 2018). Against this background, CICP can play a significant role in educating individuals who are motivated and empowered to work towards a more democratic and equitable society.

This thesis demonstrates how arts-inspired tasks can contribute to this important pedagogy by encouraging students to take risks and tolerate ambiguity, develop an understanding and appreciation of difference, and develop their own independent, reflective, critical voices. Although the tasks under consideration in this thesis could be further developed to better address issues of power and positionality, the outcomes demonstrated are highly valuable for CICP. Indeed, introducing students to creative tasks can also be considered empowering to the extent that they increase awareness of the existence of alternatives to accepted, traditional ways of doing things. Ultimately, as part of a course that approaches IC from a critical and/or cosmopolitan perspective, arts-inspired tasks have the potential to contribute to transformative learning.

It is hoped that this research is a timely and useful addition to the growing body of work that considers the importance and challenges of cosmopolitan and critical IC pedagogy. MacDonald and O'Regan (2012) call for educators to design critical intercultural courses that reflect the local context and allow students to engage in personally meaningful ways, whilst also noting the scarcity of resources for IC curricula and materials development. Arts-inspired tasks are likely to be able to play a valuable role in other settings too, as they are both transferable across settings and well-suited to harnessing diversity. Like Osei-Kofi (2013), I believe that working in artistic ways, such as using collage, offers new possibilities for students to arrive at knowledge, see themselves, others and the world in new ways, and ultimately play their part creating a more just world, as CICP demands.

P O S T L U D E

Moving Forward: Possibilities for Relationships and Resistance in my Pedagogy and Practitioner Research

Carrying out this study has particularly strengthened my belief in the importance of paying attention to relationships and the connections made as part of the research process and pedagogy. Bell hooks (1994) writes that teachers should respond to students as unique beings in ways that demonstrate respect and care, and I am sure that the research process facilitated the building of caring relationships. In my office, the students and I used one another as mutual sounding boards for ideas, helping one another see things from fresh perspectives. Sarah's comment in the second interview that “this discussion today has led me much further” showed that the research conversations were about far more than 'data collection' for my study. I noticed that several students didn't seem ready to leave my office after I'd brought the conversations to a close and I often found myself either restarting the recording as they continued to talk, or jotting down their parting comments.

Peter talked about the research conversations feeling natural and honest, about the advantages of interviewing students with whom you already have a relationship, and about how discussion functioned within the classroom within which, as he put it, “it doesn't really feel like you're necessarily only the teacher”. At the beginning of the semester I had allowed my insecurities about exposing my pedagogy to negatively impact my pedagogy, but owning my own vulnerability and positioning myself as a student (which I of course was) was later key to establishing trusting relationships. I am sure that having the confidence to make my own vulnerabilities and insecurities visible in the classroom and in the research conversations went a long way towards enabling authentic communication: sharing many of my questions and concerns about the PhD process and teaching and learning seemed to encourage many students to share more of their own experience and opinions and allowed for empathy on all sides. It takes a leap of faith in the other person to expose who you really are and what you really think rather than adopt the sort of teacher/student persona you think you should embody, but I believe this allowed authentic relationships to emerge. These relationships were important because they also facilitated constructive conversations about how things could be improved in our university and how some of the causes of alienation and stress can be resisted.

Although I have developed more confidence in my own voice and beliefs, I don't think I will ever truly overcome a sense of impostership and vulnerability. The challenge for the immediate future and the courses I am currently teaching is to continue to find positive ways to harness this vulnerability. I'm no longer able to offer an IC course within the department due to funding cuts and so I now exclusively teach the compulsory language practice classes, which is what I was originally employed to do. These courses have learning objectives, descriptions and assessment practices that were negotiated with others several years ago though and I wonder about the extent to which they are compatible with my evolving professional identity and pedagogical values. Now that my values are better developed and more clearly articulated to me it's easier to identify the contradictions in my practice, but can I now create enough space within these classes to enact what I have learnt to an extent that I can live with? For example, can I find ways to make the academic writing courses exciting, pleasurable, meaningful and empowering experiences for students? Can academic writing at undergraduate level also be taught in ways that both socialise students into and enable critique of this form? Can assessment be better designed to also reflect individual learning processes?

I now particularly feel the importance of building critical relationships with colleagues in the team and beyond, promoting an inquiry stance to our pedagogy. To what extent can established practices be challenged? Can we re-think our assumptions and renew practice at a collective level? Job insecurity and power imbalances among colleagues have created an environment of competition rather than critical collaboration: success stories of 'what works' have been shared but private insecurities, failures, questions and challenges have remained largely hidden. Can we resist this and harness vulnerabilities for collective growth? Can we carve out time in busy schedules to have conversations that go beyond issues such as appropriate grade descriptors, encompassing reflection on who we are as university teachers and how we facilitate learning that enables our students to grow intellectually and contributes to their well-being? Can we carry out practitioner research as a team? Stephen Brookfield writes that critical reflection should be a hopeful activity, and one that allows teachers to remain “emotionally intact, professionally credible, and employed” (1995: xiv). My hope is that I will be able to build relationships inside and outside the classroom that enable this and that together we will be able to advocate for ourselves and others.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Certificate of Intercultural Competence – Information Sheet (at a nearby university)

HEINRICH HEINE
UNIVERSITÄT DÜSSELDORF

STUDIERENDENAKADEMIE
Zentrum Studium Universale

iQu
Integrierte Qualitätsoffensive in Lehre und Studium

Zertifikat Interkulturelle Kompetenz

Mit dem **Zertifikat Interkulturelle Kompetenz** erhalten Studierende der Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf (HHU) die Möglichkeit, sich neben ihrem Studium durch den Erwerb von interkulturellen Schlüsselkompetenzen für die spätere Karriere zu profilieren. Attestiert werden Aktivitäten im internationalen Bereich – das können Auslandsaufenthalte, die Teilnahme an Sprachkursen und interkulturellen Trainings sowie das Engagement bei der Integration von Kommilitonen/innen aus dem Ausland sein.

- Auslandserfahrung
- Sprachkompetenz
- Interkulturelles Training
- Internationales Engagement

Studentinnen und Studenten, die an der HHU einen Abschluss anstreben, können sich für das Zertifikat jederzeit während ihres Studiums anmelden. Das Zertifikat wird vom Zentrum Studium Universale in Zusammenarbeit mit dem International Office vergeben. Die Prorektorin für Internationales unterzeichnet die Urkunde.

Zum Erwerb des Zertifikats müssen Studierende eine Teilnahme an Aktivitäten aus **3 der folgenden 4 Bausteine nachweisen**: Auslandserfahrung, Sprachkompetenz, Interkulturelles Training und Internationales Engagement. Es kann jeweils mindestens eine der innerhalb der Bausteine genannten Optionen ausgewählt werden. Bitte beachten Sie: Die Teilnahmebedingungen für Bildungsinländer/innen und -ausländer/innen weichen zum Teil voneinander ab.

Beratung und Information:

Zentrum Studium Universale
Gebäude 25.13, Raum 00.37
Universitätsstraße 1, 40225 Düsseldorf
Sprechstunde: Mittwochs 10:00-12:00
E-Mail: studium-universale@hhu.de
Telefon: +49 (0) 211 – 81 10496
www.hhu.de/interkulturelle-kompetenz

Auslandserfahrung

- **Bildungsinländer/innen**
- Studienbezogener Auslandsaufenthalt. **Nachweis: Confirmation of Stay, Transcript of Records oder anderweitige Bescheinigung der Gasthochschule**
- Praktikum im Ausland. **Nachweis: Praktikumszeugnis**
- Forschungsaufenthalt im Ausland. **Nachweis: Bestätigung des Betreuers/ der Betreuerin**
- **Bildungsausländer/innen**
- Studium oder Forschung an der HHU. **Nachweis: Immatrikulationsbescheinigung oder Transcript of Records**

Sprachkompetenz

- **Bildungsinländer/innen**
- Kurse in einer Fremdsprache, die nicht Gegenstand des Fachstudiums ist. **Nachweis: Transcript of Records oder Teilnahmenachweis**
- **Bildungsausländer/innen**
- Studienbegleitender Deutschkurs oder ein anderer nichtmuttersprachlicher Sprachkurs (außer der Sprache, die Gegenstand des Fachstudiums ist). **Nachweis: Transcript of Records oder Teilnahmenachweis**
- **Bedingungen und Anforderungen**
- Mindestdauer des Sprachkurses soll eine Woche (ganztägig) betragen.
- Bei Bildungsinländern/-innen mit Migrationshintergrund kann unter Umständen auch ein Sprachkurs in der Muttersprache (außer der Sprache, in der das Abitur erlangt wurde) anerkannt werden.
- Der Sprachkurs soll im In- oder Ausland von einer anerkannten/ offiziellen Einrichtung angeboten werden.

Interkulturelles Training

- **Bildungsinländer/innen und -ausländer/innen**
- Besuch von Lehrveranstaltungen, die vom Zentrum Studium Universale selbst angeboten werden (und keine Lehrveranstaltungen der fünf Fakultäten sind) und einen deutlichen internationalen oder interkulturellen Bezug aufweisen. **Nachweis: Bescheinigung des Zentrum Studium Universale**
- Besuch thematisch einschlägiger Workshops der Winter- oder Sommerakademien des Zentrum Studium Universale wie „Interkulturelle Kompetenz", „Diversity Management", etc. **Nachweis: Bescheinigung des Zentrum Studium Universale**
- Schulung im Rahmen der Tutorien für Studierende aus dem Ausland. **Nachweis: Zertifikat des Zentrum Studium Universale**

Internationales Engagement

- **Bildungsinländer und -ausländer/innen**
- Einsatz als Tutor/in für Studierende aus dem Ausland. **Nachweis: Bescheinigung des International Office**
- Teilnahme am Buddy-Programm. **Nachweis: Bescheinigung des International Office**
- Mitarbeit beim Erasmus Student Network Mentoren-programm. **Nachweis: Bescheinigung des ESN-Vorstands und des International Office**
- Ehrenamtliches Engagement in internationalen Studierendenvertretungen (z. B. AStA-Referat für internationale Studierende) oder Studierendenvereinen. **Nachweis: Bescheinigung des Vorstandes über Art und Umfang der Tätigkeit**

Appendix B: Reading Assigned in Winter Semester 2015/2016

Date	Topic	Reading for Class
23.10.15	Course Introduction	--
30.10.15	Intercultural Communication	*Why study language and intercultural communication?* (Jackson, 2014: 1-23)
06.11.15	Identity and Othering	*Theme 1: Identity* (Holliday, Hyde and Kullman, 2010: 7-22) *Theme 2: Othering* (Holliday, Hyde and Kullman, 2010: 23-38)
13.11.15	The Concept of Culture	---
20.11.15	Nation and Culture / 'Cultural Dimensions'	*Culture and the primary socialization process* (Jackson, 2014: 50-70) *Dimensions of culture* (Jandt, 2010: 163-185)
27.11.15	Group project	---
04.12.15	Group project	---
11.12.15	Group project	---
18.12.15	Ways of Viewing Communication	*Defining communication as an element of culture* (Jandt, 2010: 37-45)
08.01.16	Nonverbal Communication	*Nonverbal communication* (Jandt, 2010: 105-124)
15.01.16	Intercultural Communication in a Multilingual World	*Intercultural Communication in a Multilingual World* (Piller, 2011: 144-162)
22.01.16	Representation/ Exclusion	*Representation* (Holliday, Hyde and Kullman, 2010: 39-44) *Representation in the media: the case of asylum seekers* (Holliday, Hyde and Kullman, 2010: 195-200)
29.01.16	Intercultural Competence (1)	---
05.02.16	Intercultural Competence (2)	*Intercultural Competence* (Jackson, 2014: 305-323)
12.02.16	Closing Session: Course Review and Feedback	---

Appendix C: Permission to Access Participants

Universität [redacted]

[redacted]

Universität [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]
Geschäftsführungsbüro

[redacted]

[redacted], 13.4.2015

Permission to Access Particpants

Project Title: Exploring creative inquiry in the intercultural classroom

Researcher: Elizabeth Start

The [redacted] at the University [redacted] is happy to allow Elizabeth Start to invite members of her Intercultural Communication course to take part in her research project.

We are confident that potential participants will know that their decision concerning whether or not to take part will have no impact on their relationship with Ms Start and that it will in no way affect their course assessment. We are also confident that data will be kept confidential and stored securely.

In addition, we believe that the research will be of value to the participants and future course members, and potentially to the wider community.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Participant Information Sheet

Doctoral Research Project: Exploring creative inquiry in the intercultural communication classroom

Researcher: Elizabeth Start

Email: e.start.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Tel: 0157 7444 1236

Supervisors: Dr Oscar Odena, Dr Katja Frimberger

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore the effects of using creative activities in learning about and experiencing intercultural communication in a university context. I'm particularly interested in the way students represent themselves creatively, produce creative responses to theory, and ideas, and share experiences with one another. I'm interested to see if and how collaborating on creative tasks in particular can help students see, understand and value other perspectives, a key capability in intercultural communication. Another key concern of the study is the exploration of so-called 'alternative assessment' in the form of portfolios and reflective interviews. The study will take place over two semesters (WS15/16 and SS16), with two different sets of participants each semester.

Do I have to take part?

All course members over two semesters are invited to take part in the study but participation is entirely voluntary. You can change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason. The decision not to participate, or to withdraw from the study, will have no impact on course assessment or your relationship with me, nor will it be communicated to colleagues in the English Department. There are no rewards for taking part in the form of credit points or similar, but I will give you a cinema voucher as a token of my appreciation.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Participants will be asked to take part in research conversations outside class time, which will be audio recorded. In these conversations I'd like us to consider your response to the creative tasks in class, your feelings about the course portfolio, and other aspects of the course and your studies that are important to you. I would also like to use your creative work and completed course portfolio (excluding photos of people) as research material.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes. You can choose a pseudonym by which you will be referred to in any research publications and no personal contact details will be included anywhere.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases I may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research will form part of my PhD thesis and should be published at some point in 2018.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed by the College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of Glasgow, Scotland.

Contact for Further Information/Concerns:

Dr Katja Frimberger

Email: katja.frimberger@glasgow.ac.uk (Emails can be written in either German or English)

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can also contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer Dr Muir Houston, email: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this!

Appendix E: Participant Consent Form

College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Consent Form

Title of Project: Exploring creative inquiry in the intercultural communication classroom

Name of Researcher: Elizabeth Start

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Participant Information Statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I consent to my classroom interactions being audio-taped/video-taped when appropriate.
4. I consent to my course portfolio (excluding photos of people) and class work being used as research data.
5. I understand that I will be identified in research publications by a pseudonym.
6. I understand that participation (or non-participation) in the research will have no effect on assessment of my work in the course, or implications for any other classes.
7. I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant	Date	Signature

Researcher	Date	Signature

(2 COPIES TO BE SIGNED: 1 for researcher, 1 for participant)

Appendix F: Letter of Ethical Approval

CSS July 2014

University of Glasgow | College of Social Sciences

Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

Staff Research Ethics Application ☐ ***Postgraduate Student Research Ethics Application*** ☒

Application Details

Application Number: 400140198

Applicant's Name Elizabeth Start

Project Title Exploring creative inquiry in the intercultural classroom

---

Application Status **Approved**

Start Date of Approval *(d.m.yr)* 15/06/15

(blank if Changes Required/ Rejected)

End Date of Approval of Research Project *(d.m.yr)* 30/09/18

Only if the applicant has been given **approval** can they proceed with their data collection with effect from the date of approval.

Recommendations **(where Changes are Required)**

- ***Where changes are required all applicants must respond*** in the relevant boxes to the recommendations of the Committee and upload this as the **Resubmission Document** online to explain the changes you have made to the application. All resubmitted application documents should then be uploaded.
- ***If application is Rejected*** *a full new application must be submitted via the online system. Where recommendations are provided, they should be responded to and this document uploaded as part of the new application. A new reference number will be generated.*

(Shaded areas will expand as text is added)

MAJOR RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE	APPLICANT RESPONSE TO MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

MINOR RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE	APPLICANT RESPONSE TO MINOR RECOMMENDATIONS

University of Glasgow
College of Social Sciences
Florentine House, 53 Hillhead Street. Glasgow G12 8QF
The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401

Tel: 0141-330-3007 or 1990
E-mail: socsci-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk

CSS July 2014

REVIEWER COMMENTS *(OTHER THAN SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS)*	**APPLICANT RESPONSE TO REVIEWER COMMENTS**

Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the College Ethics Administration, email address: socsci-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk

End of Notification.

University of Glasgow
College of Social Sciences
Florentine House, 53 Hillhead Street. Glasgow G12 8QF
The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401

Tel: 0141-330-3007 or 1990
E-mail: socsci-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix G: Three Students' Descriptions of their Collages

Examples crafted from interview data and portfolio entries (discussed in section 6.2.2)

Christophe's description:

> *At first, I thought about the main concept, so choosing a competency when it comes to intercultural communication. The very first competency I thought of is 'analysis'. I've lived in China, Africa and Paris and analysis is to me is a really big part of intercultural communication: just taking into consideration the background of the person you are talking to and the differences you encounter. So, my collage is actually about how different cultures are viewed in our Western world. I tried to represent two contrasting ways of seeing cultural differences. For example, on the left, selling BMW cars in Arab countries, that's seen as something good for our economy. Representing football teams with Lego, a Dutch company, is good. So, that's a cultural mix and that's seen as good. Here's a girl who has a very, very, very special dog: it's not a German dog but she's got one and that's good. Representing a Japanese brand with a sword from the crusade armies, that's also seen as good. So, that's nice: that's the cultural mix. But on the other side of my collage, we can clearly see that other cultural differences are seen very differently. Like here, we have a leopard in a zoo. I wanted to show a huge difference: in the left the dog's not a German dog but it's been tamed by a human being, and here on the right we have a leopard that does not belong in the Western world and is wild. But it's still here. And since I'm an environmental activist, I'm deeply against this.*
>
> *I also represented a contrasting way of viewing of our Western economy. I think it's pretty clear, here on the right, how we see some immigrants as uncivilised people basically, since they are wearing bizarre clothes or they don't have proper shoes. So, here is also a man who supports 'Pegida' and is against immigrants. I used different adjectives not to say what's good or what is bad, but to say what is*

normal to us and what is not, from our Western point of view. So, selling cars in Arab countries can be good for the economy but, the other way around, we don't want Arabs just to come in, to live in our country, to steal our jobs. That's the nationalist movement. But we know nothing of this culture apart from all the stereotypes that we encounter in cinema, literature, and video games. So 'analysis' means that we have to think about what are doing when we sell others our products. Is it for money? Is it to so they discover our culture? Is it to bring them technology, to bring them civilisation? I don't know. But you should always be questioning. Always keep in mind that, for example, films that you watch maybe problematic on the other side of the planet. And buying products without thinking about how it has been made – well, that's problematic because you don't understand what's going on when it comes to Asian countries; that we might be a problem for them. I'm not saying that when you're buying an iPhone you know that you have modern slaves working for you, that's not the point. But I mean, you do have people who do know what's going on but still give their money to the companies that use modern slaves to bring you phones. And we also represent a problem in another respect because we do not want them to come into our countries and benefit from our economy. That's the point: just have a critical point of view when it comes to what we sell, what we buy, what we're against - primarily when it comes to those national movements - and what we are for. So, keeping a critical point of view. Because I think that's the core of intercultural communication.

Katharina's description:

This collage is very colourful because I think intercultural communication is a good thing and it's fun to be interculturally competent and to learn this. I put a person in the middle because competence is all about the person who learns this or has this ability. All these food stuffs represent how food connects to culture and is an important aspect of it. When it came to the food, I was reminded of my father who went to China for work and he was afraid about what

he might get to eat there. It was his biggest concern, that he would have to eat chicken feet or something. But he went there and really enjoyed the food because it was actually high quality with a lot of vegetables and not what you might think of.

On the collage you see curiosity, tolerance, language skills: these are the things you need to deal with the different aspects of culture and they are connected to the activities you do to learn these things, or what these aspects enable you to do. For example, if you are curious you like to try out new things, and also you need to be courageous because you never know what you're going to face and you need to want to do that, to move out of your comfort zone, which is what I did. I think confidence is a competence that comes more easily to some people than others. I'm usually a bit shy or quiet so it's actually not something that is given to me but I am curious about other cultures and I really enjoy learning about them and seeing different takes on life and ways of dealing with things and thinking about things. So that's why maybe I overcome some fears when I meet new people from other countries. And also, if you are in a situation like a student exchange, you've got no choice but to overcome your fears and meet new people and say what's on your mind.

The little squares represent people and some squares have colours in common so, for example, these two have red in common and so it could be a thing they share like a hobby, and these two have yellow in common and they could find this out when they talk to one another about what they like and then bond with each other. And here there are the differences, the stripes. They have nothing in common, they are strictly separate but you also have to accept that and embrace these differences. And together they form a new picture.

Xiu's description:

The background is about the environment in which a person lives. Nature is important for communicative competence, I think. Because

people were originally brought up so close to nature, especially to the trees and flowers. Now, after a period of building and being in the cities, they seem to have forgotten about their original birthplace, so I think that's why some modernised people find their feeling of life is not so energetic. I spent a month in the countryside in Normandy, France, in the winter break – I just found it on the internet – you work for the family and they provide you with accommodation. I saw on the website that this family makes baskets. I found this curious and I wanted to learn French, so a Chinese friend and I got on a train to go there. The French family also used to live in the town and have normal jobs, but now they have a little farm with about 5 sheep and live in a country house. They have less than 20 friends that live quite far from each other but they meet every week to discuss things. And during my stay there, seeing the green grass and nature every day, I found myself comfortable. Although this city is wonderful, when I came back I felt that I had lost something, lost my roots. So, I think intercultural communicative competence also has something to do with the basic idea of life, because all the human beings actually share the same original roots, and that is nature. When you are brought up, or you live near the countryside, or you have more contact with nature, you will understand others better. If you are comfortable with the world which you are connected with, you are definitely going to be more comfortable with the other people. So, my idea was that the picture is beautiful, it's a reflection of nature, and that's how this man was brought up.

And this dinosaur represents history and the fact that we should understand their own history and the history of others to understand each other because everyone's character and how he or she thinks all come from their past experience, and their past experiences are built by the environment and also the political situation in the country, or the past culture of this nation. So, to understand history is to understand now and the future and if you have read all about this you will better understand why people behave the way they do, and you will forgive and understand more than argue. You will never say

that someone is definitely wrong or you are absolutely right, you just understand each other. The man is holding books, newspapers, words which the world consists of: through reading something you can understand how human worlds function.

In your head you have your identity. I just happened to have a picture of Angela Merkel and she represents a kind of identity, not necessarily social status but who you are and what your responsibilities in life are. Like when you are a teacher and you communicate with students, you know your identity, and how you should behave. One of my German classmates wasn't sure about what he wanted to do, but after a year's experience in China he decided that he would be a writer so basically he got up every day in the morning and just wrote, even though he didn't really know what to write. Every day that he did this, it was a kind of practice because he had already decided that he was going to be a writer and he knew what he had to do to become good. This is also an intercultural competence because if you don't have an idea of who you are you kind of lose your motivation. Take the example of him: when he talks to people, like refugees from some countries, he will have an idea of who he is as a writer and what his role is, so he knows what information to collect and what aspect he will focus on. If you have your focus then you know what you should be doing. And you get something from that. So, you should have your identity first then you know what you are doing and you are going to do it well.

The heart on the picture – well, you need the heart to accept things, love and emotion. You need to feel that to feel alive. While you are in nature, or learning history, you need to feel that you are connected to have that energy. That's really a competence. I would say that to feel things is an intercultural competence. I read that if you talk to someone in his or her mother tongue, the words go into his or her heart. But if you talk in the second language, it only goes into your mind. And when I talk in German, although German is not so easy and I have to struggle to talk, you don't have the burden of your own language: I could never say 'I love you' in Chinese to

someone but you can say 'I love you' in German every day to your friends because you don't feel anything when talking German, even though you are forming the structures! When we first came to Germany, we needed to learn how to hang our feelings on letters because that's something we never did before. Even though we were English majors, we just studied the language as a kind of duty and we never really used the language to express ourselves in Asia.